

England's gentle revolutionaries

page 14



Tessa Sanderson, still breaking records at 40

In the 24-page Sports section

Granny is not too old to surf the net

In the 12-page Network pull-out

The dangerous games our children play

Section Two, Family Life



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER Sunshine and showers 40p (R 45p)

Bad news for parents: Teenagers cost £36 a day



Drinking deep: Teenagers at the Sydney Brasserie, Battersea. Today's adolescents have increasingly expensive tastes

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

GLENDIA COOPER

Teenagers are not only rude, rowdy and rebellious. But now they are also, it turns out, very expensive. Bringing up your adolescent can cost nearly £67,000, according to a new study, because of the rising costs of everything from education to driving lessons to mobile phones. Even for parents on average incomes prepared to face down teenage tantrums, the cost is still likely to average £25,000.

What Price a Child Volume II, commissioned by Asda, looked at the costs of keeping a 16- to 21-year-old including food, transport and education and concluded that for more wealthy parents the cost over five years could be as high as £66,990.

Parents blanching at the thought may like to reflect that the same sum would have bought them a quiet country cottage instead; or a second-

vision football player; or an annual Caribbean holiday of the most luxurious kind; or 30 round-the-world flights; or 11 Versace dresses; or half of Damien Hirst's sheep suspended in formaldehyde. (Parents avoiding two expensive teenagers could, of course, have the whole sheep.)

An earlier report by the same team concluded that a baby's first five years of life would cost parents an average £20,000 and warned that having a child "could be the most expensive decision of your life".

But as children grow up and begin to fly the nest, parents may have been forgiven for thinking that the approach to adulthood equals financial independence. Maybe so, but there are some significant expenses to be got over first.

The cost of the food teenagers will crunch and dribble their way through in that time comes to £5,463, with the more generous parents spend-

ing £7,259. Electricity to keep them warm, and fuel the hairdryer and CD player will come to an average £340.45.

One of the frequent causes of rows between parents and children is the telephone bill. If parents are lucky they manage to restrain their offspring from ringing their current innumerate until after 6pm when the cost is only 1.7p a minute rather than 4p. But an average estimate will still set you back £132.60 with high users spending £374.40. For parents of yuppie children or those worried for their safety out on the town, a mobile phone will cost £910 during adolescence.

Then there is learning to drive. This includes an average of 30 lessons at £13.50, plus a provisional licence (£21) and the test itself (£28.50) - £454.50 if they pass first time. Until they pass their test they will be leaning on parents to act as their own private taxi service. Allowing for two pick-

ups per week until the age of 18 and then six train tickets a year after that, plus a few taxis, the average cost is £439.80.

Parents who purchase a second-hand Ford Fiesta for their child not only pay the £750 asking price, but may well end up forking out for insurance as well - typical cost £1,645.

Christmas and birthdays come to £700 over this five-year period and maybe as much as £1,050.

With one in three teenagers now going on to higher education, parents are expected to help with grants according to their income. If the parents' joint income exceeds £60,599 they will be expected to pay the full amount of grant and tuition bills totalling £5,800 a year. More typically the average payment by parents is £880 a year though many will also pay for rent food and overdrafts on top. They finally leave. You shed a tear. But there's one more cheque to sign. It may not hap-

pen when they are 21, but the chances are your child will one day get married. Up to 70 per cent of couples look to two sets of parents to help. The average cost of a wedding is £9,247.

It is all, of course, rather good news for teenagers themselves, and for people who do not propose to have any. For if you can avoid having the more expensive brand of teenager you will, on these figures, save around £36 a day, which would buy a thoroughly dissolute lifestyle.

Just think: around 240 cigarettes every day, or three bottles of champagne a day, or a slap-up meal at a restaurant, with partner, every two days, year after year after year. And for those with a sweetish tooth and a robust digestive system, it would pay for 141 Mars bars every day for five years. Enjoy!

What Price a Child Volume II, costs £99 available from Lynne Franks PR, 327-329 Harrow Road London W9 3RB.

Shrink the Commons, say Tory left

Call to cut number of MPs by 150

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

Conservative moderates yesterday set out a draft manifesto calling for far-reaching reform of the political system - including a cut in the number of MPs who sit in the Commons - as part of their fight back against the "beef war jingoism" currently gripping Parliament.

The "wet" Tory Reform Group document calls for public services to come before tax cuts, and for a more left-wing transport policy than Labour, including higher taxes on business to pay for public transport and a tax on company car parking.

It also calls for a cut in the size of the Commons to 500, with "increased pay" for MPs, and all-party talks on the future of the House of Lords.

The foreword is written by David Hunt, the former Cabinet minister close to John Major, who emerged yesterday as head of a new group, called Conservative Mainstream, formed to counter the growing strength of the Euro-sceptic right.

The Prime Minister was brutally reminded of the strength of "Tory pro-Europeans" by George Walden, Tory MP for Buckingham and a former minister, who threatened yesterday to wipe out the Government's one-vote Commons majority if the campaign to disrupt Brussels business was escalated.

But Mr Major will come under pressure from the opposite wing of his party after Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, said yesterday there was no prospect of a timetable for lifting the ban on British beef. Mr Santer accused Mr Major of "mismanaging" the situation and predicted that his campaign to disrupt Brussels business would backfire.

He said the key issue was consumer confidence and that would not return as a result of a fixed timetable. "We cannot decide through a decree when confidence will be restored."

Mr Major has been careful to demand a "framework" rather than a timetable, but Mr Santer's intervention makes it harder for him to end the non-co-operation strategy without appearing to back down.

The Prime Minister is now in danger of being squeezed between the nationalist sentiment of most Tory MPs and newspapers and the small group of

He said he would not join Labour or the Liberal Democrats but, speaking to the Independent after making a veiled threat on GMTV, he did not rule out using his vote to bring down the Government. "I'm not going to do anything petulant or rash, because that's what I deplore... but I just think that someone has to point the finger and say this is really not the action of a mature country."

His threat gives real force to what would otherwise be just another re-launch of the Tory left. Mr Hunt's new grouping will attempt to unite a range of groups, including the Tory Reform Group (TRG).

Part of the new group's role will be to try to balance the organised right in the fight for the Tory leadership which many regard as inevitable after the election. But the TRG's draft manifesto also fires the first real shots in the coming war over the ideological shape of the Tory manifesto for the next election.

The document says: "The balance between higher taxes and better public services is a difficult one, but we shall always remember our duty to protect the weak when we set tax levels for everyone."

It admits that voters "feel a sense of alienation from government and the political system", and suggests cutting the number of MPs to 500.

It also says the Conservative Party should offer to take part in talks on the future of the House of Lords, "but on the basis that we will not accept an entirely appointed second chamber" - implying support for some kind of elections.



George Walden: Tory MP threatening Major

Tories who do not like his anti-EU tactics.

Sir Jerry Wiggin, chairman of the all-party agriculture select committee, said: "The matter was escalated beyond credibility when the EU announced the ban on British beef... the Europeans simply broke the rules."

Mr Walden, on the other hand, said it was "embarrassing enough now" to be a member of the Tory party, but "if this is just the beginning of a profoundly mistaken and morally wrong strategy, then I would have to consider my position".

XERYUS ROUGE
POUR HOMME



GIVENCHY

'Corrupt' Russian connection to Serb in funding controversy

STEVE BOGGAN
JOJO MOYES
JOEL REEVES
and MICHAEL RICKS

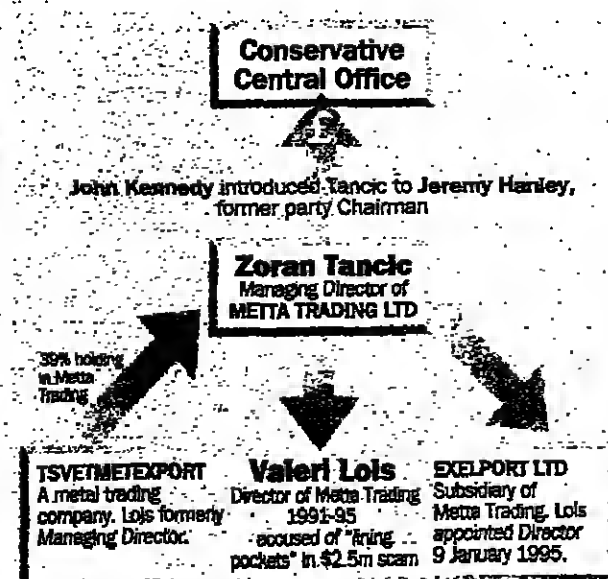
The Serb who gave thousands of pounds to the Conservatives is in business with a Russian at the centre of a £2.5m corruption scandal in Moscow.

Zoran Tancic, whose donation is being investigated by the Tories, is closely linked to Valeri Lois, the former head of a Russian state-owned metal giant. President Boris Yeltsin was asked to sack Mr Lois after one of Russia's most senior law officers accused him of "channeling state money" into his own pockets.

The latest disclosure comes three days after Jeremy Hanley, the former Tory party chairman who dined with Mr Tancic, sought to deflect the donor's Serbian links by telling the Independent: "Most of the time we talked about his business in Russia and his plans to build a factory in the UK."

At the time the party accepted Mr Tancic's donation, described by officials as "less than £50,000", the Russian was chairman of Mr Tancic's company.

It is not known whether Conservative Central Office knew of Mr Tancic's Russian partner when they accepted the money,



but the latest development in the upper echelons of the Serb government.

One of his fellow directors on Metta Trading - and chairman in 1994 - was Valeri Lois, 51, former managing director of Tsvetmetexport, a formerly state-owned company specialising in the import and export of metals and technology. Mr Lois is now a director of a Metta subsidiary, Ekspol, which has major shareholders in Liech-

tenstein. According to company records, Tsvetmetexport owns 39 per cent of Metta Trading.

During a programme on Russian television in 1993, Mr Lois was described as a corrupt official by Aleksandr Kotenkov, the head of the state legal administration service.

Describing a deal in which Mr Lois allegedly channelled \$2.5m (£1.6m) of state money into a Swiss firm and later received a credit card with no credit limit, Mr Kotenkov said: "... it is one of the examples of a direct channelling of state money into your own pocket."

The programme was intended to explain to Russians new to capitalism why it was wrong for civil servants to align themselves with private companies. Mr Kotenkov produced evidence to show that Mr Lois had entered into a deal with a Swiss firm, Seabeco Metals AG, whose directors were fellow Russians.

"The then Soviet side was represented by Tsvetmetexport led by Valeri Lois," he said. "The so-called foreign side was represented by the company called Seabeco International Ltd, headed by [another Russian]. But then the following decision was taken: to determine that the estimated expenditure on Seabeco Metals AG over 1991-92 should be £2.5m."

"It is quite a sum for a small company, incidentally, with a limited number of managers, just four people... £2.5m for two years. Not bad."

Mr Kotenkov said a decision was taken to give three of the four, including Mr Lois, the unlimited credit cards.

"We say that in accordance with the documents which we have received, this person carried out actions incompatible with the status of a civil servant. We ask the president to take a decision on releasing him from his post."

Mr Lois could not be contacted yesterday. His son, Dmitri, said his father resigned and was not sacked. He also argued that Tsvetmetexport was a private company which had never been state-owned.

"There were government deals and there were orders but it was never state-owned," he said. "This is what people didn't understand... because of the political changes at the time. There were problems between Yeltsin and people like [Vice President] Rutskoy. It was also because there were very many changes in higher levels of business."

The Tories made no comment yesterday on further claims that they had been warned by MI6 about the source of some Serbian donations in 1992.

QUICKLY

Milk ultimatum

The Government was challenged last night to publish within 24 hours the names of baby milk products containing chemicals which could reduce fertility, or take them off the shelves.

Page 3

Funding shake-up

A two-tier system of universities, with a premier league of ancient institutions receiving priority funding at the expense of second-division former polytechnics is being planned by government advisers.

Page 5

CONTENTS

Section 1
BUSINESS & CITY 17
COMMENT 13-15
ESSAY 14
GAZETTE 16
LEADING ARTICLES 18
LETTERS 13
OBITUARIES 16
SCIENCE 18

Section 2
ARTS 22, 23
DO WE NEED? 8, 21
FAMILY LIFE 6, 4
JULIE MYERSON 4
LISTINGS 24, 25
NETWORK 9-15
TV & RADIO 27, 28
WEATHER 25



news

Catastrophe est la faute des Rosbifs

Paul Field, in western France, finds out who is to blame for the beef crisis

There is a farm in Brèche, 15 km from Tours, western France, that John Major should best avoid. It is home to Richard Courtigné, a farmer who understandably gets passionate when his one of herd answers a call of nature.

Standing in a field, wife Christine and daughter Charlotte, three, beside him, he points at the rear of the animal and yells: "Look at that - as green as the grass she feeds on." His heifers and steers are huge, healthy beasts, traditionally reared and most certainly BSE-free but he is struggling to sell them. And he knows why.

"My business is suffering because British farmers feed their cattle contaminated meat and the British government deregulated the beef industry and failed to act properly over BSE," he says.

"And all your Prime Minister wants is to declare war on Europe because we do not want your beef. He is only interested in winning votes because the British want to be outside Europe."

French beef sales plummeted after the BSE scare in Britain and are still down 25 per cent when sales in Britain are returning to pre-crisis levels. Stunning beef comes hard to the French; although they refer to Britons as *Les Rosbifs*, France is the largest consumer of beef in Europe, producing 1,800,000 tonnes a year, and importing even more.

In restaurants and delicatessens, *andouillette*, a small tripe sausage, *amourette*, spinal bone marrow, and *côte de veau*, calf head, remain on the menu but beef offal has not been selling well since the Institute of National Consumers told the public not to eat them as *raché jolle* fears gripped the nation.

The lack of consumer confidence is reflected in the problems facing Mr Courtigné. He has 50 bulls, 40 prime beef heifers and steers and a hand-



Herd instinct: Richard Courtigné on his farm near Tours. He says John Major is exploiting the dispute for political ends. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

ful of dairy cows. Every year he exports 80 per cent of his bulls to Italy, Spain and Arab countries. His overseas sales suffered slightly after the devaluation of the lira and peseta, but collapsed after the world-wide ban on British beef imposed at the end of March.

"Our markets closed overnight. The statement from your Health Secretary about Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease was a catastrophe for French farmers," he says. "The value of our beef fell dramatically because for the French, until there is proof, there is a risk."

The price per live kilogram for his cattle has dropped by 3 francs, about 40p, more than double the fall at British markets. Selling 12 beef cattle a year, with a drop from £6,800 to £5,600 francs a head, he stands to lose £1,800. The value of his bulls has fallen from £8,000 to £6,500.

His frustration is all the more

severe owing to his methods of rearing cattle. It is what in Britain would be considered traditional, extensive farming, and an exception to the rule. In France, it is the norm. Most of the 120,000 beef farmers belong to the *Vieille Bovine Française* quality-assurance scheme, under which each animal has a certificate detailing its name, breed, date of birth and origins. Supermarkets and butchers all display the logo on their counters or in their windows.

"In effect, our animals each have an identity card and the scheme has helped us through this crisis. In France, consumers know what they are buying."

It is odd, then, given the farming methods and the mark of excellence, that even in a butcher's in Châteauneuf-la-Valière, the nearest town to Brèche, customers are reluctant to buy beef. A poster highlights how the different parts of a calf can be served, yet the last few

customers before the shop shuts for the afternoon are buying chicken. "It is not worth the risk," says one. "Some farmers use British cows for breeding."

In another shop, at nearby Beaumont-la-Ronce, butcher Cedric Rouable is indignant. "We will not have British beef in here, we will not have any French beef that has been near British beef, which is why our sales were only affected for two weeks after the crisis, which is further proof that Britain is the broiler of Europe. Belgian beef is even worse, of course."

As in Britain, the French beef crisis has affected all sectors of the industry. Owing to the remoteness of many French farms and the small number of cattle reared, producers tend to sell their cattle to middlemen, who deliver them to abattoirs.

One such dealer, Christian Chauveau, explains the problems facing the industry. "The export business has collapsed,

abattoirs and renderers are not getting British beef to prepare for sale, and people like me are losing money fast. There is a lot of unemployment in the slaughter and cutting sector."

"Even as sales start to return to normal, prices remain deflated. There is a fear about eating beef and I am worried that if the export ban on Britain is lifted, fears will grow about contaminated meat being in circulation. That may not reflect reality but it does reflect the French psyche."

Reading aloud an article from the *Terre de Touraine*, a farming newspaper for the Loire region, is beef farmer Jacques Méchin. He nods in agreement with reports that cattle per head are still down by £1,500.

When he gets to an editorial, referring to Britain's unacceptable behaviour in allowing the BSE crisis to escalate, he thumps on the kitchen table at

his farm in Pernay, 7 km south of Brèche. "The British should slaughter the lot. That is the only way to eradicate the disease." His wife, Denise, agrees. "In France, if one cow in a herd of 200 gets BSE, they are all destroyed. That is why we have only had 19 cases since 1991. British farmers are greedy, giving their cattle infected feed, it is a scandal."

If the couple sold all their stock, it would be worth 15 per cent less than it was before the BSE scare. "We should get compensation for our losses. This crisis is not our fault. It is the responsibility of British farmers, who are getting plenty of compensation, and who pays for that? People like us."

So, Mr Major, even if you wear a tin hat, brandish a bayonet, or arrive in a tank, stay away from Brèche and Pernay, and farming communities like them all over France. Or you're dead meat.

Ulster elections: Republican joins old foe as assembly plan burdened by history and location

Unconscious hypocrisy of nationalism

I was brought up in an Irish nationalist tradition but from the advent of the Provisional IRA offensive in 1971, I became increasingly aware that the position of constitutional nationalists, with regard to political violence, is riddled with unconscious hypocrisy.

Nationalists condemned political violence, but regularly used it as an argument to convince the British of the need for concessions. Thus, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was sold to the British in 1985 - under Mrs Thatcher - as being about "to marginalise the men of violence" by reconciling the nationalists to the status quo. There was not a soul in Ireland who ever believed that, but Mrs Thatcher bought the line, thus infuriating the unionists; and this was the object.

After 1985, things got worse. John Hume and Gerry Adams began the insidious alliance between constitutional nationalists and Sinn Féin. Hume-Adams was sold in the nationalist press as bringing about the conversion of Sinn Féin-IRA to the democratic process. What happened was a contrary effect. Sinn Féin-IRA succeeded in converting democratic process in the Republic to its own use.

Irish government statements, and those of senior gov-

ernment officials, are couched in language acquired second-hand from Sinn Féin. This is not just a matter of rhetoric. The relevant people are now imbued with the spirit of Sinn Féin: paranoid distrust of the British, hatred and contempt for the unionists. Senior public servants revealed this month that the Irish government's objective, in negotiating with the British, is to "drive David Trimble wild".

Nobody in the Republic, except myself, seemed to see any objection to this version of the Peace and Reconciliation at which all the nationalist parties profess to aim.

This account may give you a general idea as to why I reject Irish nationalism - now dominated by Sinn Féin-IRA - and have become a unionist. I believe the more gains there are for what Gerry Adams calls "the Irish peace process", the nearer Ireland will get to civil war. Adams's peace process consists of a pincer-movement applied to the unionist



Party spirit: Conor Cruise O'Brien with UK Unionists Bob McCartney and Cedric Wilson

community. One pincer is the IRA's cat-and-mouse violence and related blackmail. The other is Irish pressure on the British to move down the nationalist agenda. If there is any serious movement in that direction, the loyalist ceasefire will break down.

When Bob McCartney in-

formed me to be a candidate for the United Kingdom Unionists, I accepted without hesitation. He is the ablest as well as the most amiable of the unionist leaders. His party not only has no links with sectarian groups but is explicitly committed to anti-sectarian policies. His party is offering the unionist com-

munity leadership of exceptional high quality. They will need that, under the pressure of those pan-nationalist pincers. I am proud to be able to give them a hand in resisting, by democratic and peaceful means, a version of Irish nationalism that has turned into something very like imperialism.

forced their way in and there was a scuffle in which a policeman had his arm broken. One of the members also managed to break a table - and these were elected representatives."

The final session ended in uproar after Mr Paisley verbally attacked David Trimble.

The failures of the previous elected bodies meant that many years passed before the path was tried again with the Northern Ireland assembly, which lasted from 1982 to 1986. While the SDLP and Sinn Féin contested the election, both refused to take their seats.

The assembly was attended principally by Mr Paisley's party and the middle-of-the-road Alliance party, with the Ulster Unionists displaying only limited enthusiasm.

The Alliance party withdrew, leaving only Unionists in the assembly. In 1986 it was formally dissolved, but 21 Unionist members refused to leave the chamber and were forcibly ejected by police.

Forum may have to meet in sports hall

DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

With Northern Ireland voters going to the polls on Thursday to elect 110 members of a new forum, the Government is still searching for somewhere for the new body to meet.

The increasingly desperate nature of the search is illustrated by the fact that it is seriously considering locating the forum in a sports centre.

Even though the campaign has not fired the public imagination, voters are expected to turn out in large numbers. They will be choosing 110 members of the forum, but the more important purpose is to provide a pool from which negotiators will be drawn for inter-party talks.

The key question about inter-party talks is whether Sinn Féin will be present: the party will only be admitted if another IRA ceasefire is called, and at the moment this looks unlikely.

A senior Irish government adviser, Fergus Finlay, has said that talks without Sinn Féin would not be worth a penny candle. Opinion is divided on this: some believe progress could be made, though obviously little progress would be made on arms decommissioning.

The two governments are committed to pressing ahead with or without Sinn Féin, although the Irish government has little faith that progress could be made in the absence of republicans.

With Dublin nervous about becoming involved in what might be a meaningless exercise, an Anglo-Irish ministerial meeting in London last week failed to reach agreement on the exact terms for talks.

The election itself is being held on an entirely new system. Each of the 18 Westminster constituencies will return five members. These will be augmented by 20 more, with two extra seats going to each of the 10 largest parties. Contesting the election are the Ulster Unionists, the Democratic Unionists, the SDLP, Sinn Féin, and the Alliance party. The Progressive Unionists and the Ulster Democratic Party - who are close to the loyalist paramilitaries - are expected to gain enough votes to take them to the table.

Unpromising history of disruption and violence

While the Government hopes the new forum will help progress, such bodies in the past proved not to be vehicles for agreement but arenas for disruption, boycotts and even hand-to-hand fighting, writes David McKitterick.

All four were wound up in failure. One factor was the competition for support within Unionism. While David Trimble's Ulster Unionists are the largest party, the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists regularly win a third of the Unionist vote. Mr Paisley has proved the most prominent figure in elected bodies, his appetite for theatrical protests often heating the atmosphere.

The widespread belief among nationalists is that a new elected body would be under Unionist control, and encourage the Unionist instinct towards majoritarianism rather than consensus. Thus Sinn Féin is to boycott the new forum, while the SDLP has made it clear it will be wary about taking part.

The Stormont parliament, which existed between 1921 and 1972, became a symbol of Protestant supremacy. Although it was set up on the Westminster model, the crucial element of alternation of power was missing.

For 50 years the Unionist party won every election and formed every government. When Stormont nationalist MPs complained of anti-Catholic discrimination, they were told by British ministers that such matters were Stormont's responsibility.

The institution proved unable to cope with the Catholic civil rights agitation in the late 1960s and the violence of the early 1970s. As the security situation worsened the SDLP withdrew from Stormont and in 1972 Edward Heath's government, despairing of reforming the institution, closed it down.

The Northern Ireland assembly (1973-74) was set up by Mr Heath as an attempt to establish a new devolved

administration which would be run jointly by Protestants and Catholics. A moderate Unionist faction led by the late Brian Faulkner combined with the SDLP to form a new "power-sharing executive" drawn from the assembly.

Loyalists, finding themselves in a minority in the assembly, disrupted the proceedings. An assembly official, Maurice Hayes, recalled: "Ministers, especially Faulkner, were abused verbally on every occasion and sometimes even physically. Faulkner was spat upon, jostled, reviled and shouted down."

One account gives a flavour of the time: "The loyalists entered the executive at 2.30. There were shouts and howls. Some climbed up and danced on desks. Other loyalists leaped upon the table beside the dispatch box, removed the mace, and began a parade about the chamber. One danced upon the speaker's table and shouted: 'We have driven the money changers from the temple.'"

He then chained and padlocked himself to a bench."

Five months after the establishment of the executive, a Protestant general strike was launched by a committee, which included members of paramilitary groups, the Ulster Unionist party and the DUP. Within weeks this brought Northern Ireland to a virtual standstill and caused the collapse of both the executive and the assembly.

The next elected body, the Constitutional Convention of 1975-6 was less violent but also failed to produce political progress. In the chamber there was no actual violence but a mistrustful atmosphere, with walk-outs, much heckling and angry exchanges.

In his memoirs Mr Finlay described one incident during the institution's life: "Thirty-five convention members, including Paisley, had come down to my office demanding to see me. They were not allowed in because they had not made an appointment. However, they

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

A man shot dead in Belfast at the weekend is believed to have been the fourth victim of the latest food within the Irish National Liberation Army.

Desmond McCleery, 37, was singled out by a gunman as he sat in the Chicago Pizzeria on Saturday afternoon. He attempted to run away but was shot in the back and in the head. The killing was witnessed by a large number of staff and customers, including children. The gunman left the scene, then returned to wipe his fingerprints from a door handle.

McCleery, 37, of Lurgan, Co. Antrim, was said to be the second-in-command of one INLA faction. The feud began in January when Gino Gallagher, the INLA's reputed chief-of-staff, was shot dead by a member of a rival faction in a Falls Road dole office. The Gallagher faction yesterday claimed responsibility for killing McCleery, alleging he had been involved in the murder of Gallagher.

Customers should be given shares in the privatised utilities, according to a key adviser to the government. Giving the public a direct stake in the businesses would be the best way of spreading the benefits of the efficiency gains made since the firms were sold off, said Brian Pomeroy, a senior partner at accountants Deloitte & Touche, and author of the government White Paper on utility regulation.

He argued in a paper published by the Social Market Foundation, an independent think-tank, that money earned from cost savings could be used to buy shares for customer unit trusts, which would be allocated on the basis of how much gas, electricity and water they used. The shares could then be used to help pay utility bills or else build up an equity stake. "This is not to suggest that the privatised utilities should now be turned over, lock, stock and barrel, to customer ownership," said Mr Pomeroy. "But simply that some element of equity would be a valuable component in the relationship between customer and company, particularly when set in the context of stakeholder ideas more generally."

Armed forces struck at the derelict Matrix Churchill factory in Coventry - which was at the centre of the arms-to-Iraq scandal - for the second time in a fortnight. The plant has been empty since the company collapsed with the loss of 860 jobs following a raid by Customs and Excise officers in October 1990. In the latest attack on Saturday night a fifth of the factory was destroyed. Sixty firefighters worked through the night to bring the blaze under control.



A £42m investment by BT was launched yesterday by the actress Joanna Lumley (above) to revitalise and modernise more than 60,000 payphones and usher in a new generation of phonocards.

The new phonocards which feature gold-coloured microchips and display the remaining value of calls in cash rather than units will replace the existing phonocards which have been in use for 15 years.

Although in its current form the new phonocard will be a disposable prepaid card for use in BT payphones, its microchip technology will pave the way for the introduction of smartcards which may be used to buy almost anything. In a "less society, the smartcard would become interchangeable with other cards so that it could be used in shops of all kinds.

BT says the number of phones that will accept the new cards will increase by 44 per cent to 62,000 by the end of 1996. Around 25,000 of these will also take cash, credit and chargecards compared to 12,000 at present. The old-style red telephone boxes, which BT is currently re-introducing, will also employ the new technology.

A football fan charged with the murder of another supporter outside Wembley Stadium on Saturday will appear before magistrates in Brent, north-west London today. Peter Johnson, 30, of Plymouth, is accused of murdering Kelvin Noon, 24, of Salcombe, Devon, who suffered a fatal head injury before the Third Division play-off match in which Plymouth Argyle beat Darlington 1-0. Both were thought to be Plymouth Argyle supporters. A Scotland Yard spokesman said: "The incident at this stage is not believed to be a case of opposing supporter rivalry."

Cracks in the structure of Sea King helicopters operated by the Royal Navy and RAF have cost taxpayers almost £10m, according to government figures. Nine of the services' 144 helicopters are currently out of service awaiting repairs.

Since the Sea King entered service in 1970 cracks have appeared in 170 lift frames - the part of the fuselage which takes the lift from the rotors - at an average cost of £58,000 per repair. A Fleet Air Arm spokesman said the problem had never been known to cause an accident, but the bulk of the Sea King fleet will be gradually replaced by the new EH101 Merlin helicopter from 1998.

A religious relic that was stolen and dumped by thieves is to be returned to the church from where it was taken after an £8,000 security system has been installed. The 12th century ivory and gold casket of St Petroc has been missing from Anglican St Petroc's church in Bodmin, Cornwall, for 20 months. It is so rare that the thieves found it unsaleable and dumped it on a Yorkshire motor. Church rector Canon Ken Rogers said the Byzantine casket is due to be returned on 4 June, which is the feast of St Petroc - a fifth century missionary who crossed the Irish Sea in a wicker coracle to convert the Cornish and set up a monastery.

Five Lottery winners shared a £10.2m jackpot, scooping £2,054,754 each. The winning numbers were 8, 26, 42, 20, 34 and 43 with the bonus number 25. A further 23 winners matched five numbers plus the bonus ball to win £137,441 each. For matching five numbers, 1,950 ticket-holders netted £1,013 each; for four numbers, 73,917 won £58; for three numbers, 1,164,449 won £10.

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NT SHORTS

Pepsi blues over £300m relaunch

GLENDIA COOPER

As Pepsi took the cola wars into space this week, filming an advertisement on the Mir space station, things on the ground were looking a little more blue for them.

It is nearly two months since Pepsi's extravagant, but it seems less than successful relaunch.

The soft drink's £300m image change at the beginning of April has not been translated into a rise in market share, according to confidential industry figures, with industry observers suggesting it has "misfired".

At the April launch in Britain, 400 journalists were taken into a converted aircraft hangar at Gatwick airport to be persuaded that Project Blue - Pepsi's decision to change their cans from red, white and blue to, er, blue - was "modern, cool, exciting and dynamic." The supermodels Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer, accompanied by tennis star Andre Agassi, turned up - as did a Coccodrillo (painted blue), and the *Daily Mirror* appeared printed on blue paper.

But marketing experts were sceptical, and the latest figures seem to show that Pepsi has not succeeded in "changing the script" as its advertising campaign promised.

Figures that are prepared for A C Nielsen, which provides monthly analyses to the cola industry, suggest that Pepsi's volume share of the whole carbonated soft drink (CSD) take-home market slipped from 8.3 per cent in March to 7.9 per cent in April, although it went back up to 8.2 per cent in May. At the same time, Coca-Cola's share has risen from 25.5 per cent in March to 26.8 per cent in May, while own-label colas in supermarkets have slipped slightly from 30.2 per cent in March 1996 to 29.8 per cent in May.

However, Pepsi says that if the data were to include only the cola market, rather than the whole of the CSD sector, the volume sales for Pepsi among the take-home market would be seen to have grown 18.6 per cent, and its market share to have gone up by 0.6 per cent, while Coke was down 0.8 per cent.

Pepsi remains unbowed. "We feel really good about what is happening," said Simon Lowden, marketing director for Pepsi UK. "This is not a 1996 thing - it's for 1997, 98, 99. It's a long-term project repositioning the brand."

But among retailers, the feeling is mixed. A spokeswoman for Sainsbury's said: "After a slow start, the impact of Pepsi Blue is now beginning to build and show incremental growth."

But Asda takes a different view: "Our own brand was outstripping Pepsi by two to one before the relaunch. And we were already packaging our cola in blue last summer."

Sean Brierley, deputy editor of *Marketing Week*, said Pepsi had "completely missed the mark". "Heads will roll. They had staked their careers on this." Dominic Mills, editorial director of the advertising magazine *Campaign*, said: "They had a perfectly good drink. If you like that kind of thing, it's a risky strategy to hinge everything on a change of colour - which it's all it was."



Virtually real: With the aid of the latest computer technology, visitors can 'roam' the monument. At the real site, a cordon to protect Stonehenge prevents close-up inspection

Montage: Jim Pavlidis

Ancient Stonehenge joins the multi-media age

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

This summer, for the first time, it will be possible to get your head round Stonehenge. Visitors who want to ponder the message of the ancient stones will be able to scrutinise them as closely as they like, using a virtual-reality headset which generates a three-dimensional image.

English Heritage, which administers the ancient monument in Wiltshire, will next

month demonstrate in Salisbury a computerised version of the 5,000-year-old site. Using virtual reality, the user will be able to "roam" anywhere inside an exact simulacrum of the concentric circles of ancient stones.

The images have been recreated from geological, photographic and laser imaging data, so users can view details and contours ranging over an area of more than a square mile around Stonehenge itself.

At the moment it is impossi-

ble to get near to the actual central circle of towering stones, which has been cordoned off by a low fence since 1978. This keeps people up to 40 feet away to prevent damage to the stones and their surroundings, and give everybody an equal view of the site.

Visitors pay £3 for access, but Stonehenge's popularity remains undiminished: on a busy day there are up to 6,000 visitors and last year a total of 708,000 people passed through

the official Visitor Centre, an increase of 18 per cent on 1994.

The virtual-reality alternative would allow a visit without the bother of crowds, doubtful weather or access restrictions.

"Rather than having to go to the stones in real life, you will have the real thing there on the computer that you can effectively walk around," according to Andrew Dennison, a virtual-reality application developer at VR Solutions of Salford, which is recreating the site in

software. Early uses are likely to be in the Visitor Centre at Stonehenge itself, and for examining the potential effects of any changes - such as road layout - on the site's appearance.

In future, CD-ROM and Internet versions of the virtual-reality site may also be put on sale so that children and adults around the world could experience the site's layout without needing to go there.

The building of Stonehenge is thought to have begun around

3,000BC, in the late Stone or early Bronze Age. A number of elements were added in the succeeding centuries, including stones brought from the Welsh mountains and Pembrokeshire. The purpose of the site, ruined during the Roman occupation, is unclear. However, the orientation of a number of the important stones suggests that it had a religious significance which was also connected to the seasons' solstices.

Brian Hath, English Her-

itage's head of design and interpretation, said that the computer model will "make Stonehenge accessible to many more people without impacting on the stones, landscape and nearby archaeological remains".

Another version of the model, being prepared by the British company Superscape, will allow computer users to "visit" the site as it might have looked at any date past or future and see how at the solstices, sunrise and sunset highlight particular stones.

Fertility threat: Fears grow over sex-change chemicals

Ministry keeps silent on names of baby milks

GLENDIA COOPER

The Government was challenged last night to publish within 24 hours the names of baby-milk products containing chemicals which could reduce fertility, or take them off the shelves.

Worried mothers besieged baby-milk companies with calls following the revelation in the *Independent on Sunday* that nine leading brands contained levels of phthalates close to those found to damage the testicles and reduce sperm count in baby rats.

As the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food refused to name the brands Nigel Griffiths, Labour's consumer affairs spokesman, spoke of a "culture of cover-up" and said that parents had a right to know. The Consumers' Association and the British Medical Association also criticised the Government.

Phthalates, which are widely used to soften plastic, are among a group of "gender benders" thought to mimic female hormones and cause freak occurrences such as the feminisation of male fish and other wildlife.

Scientists estimated that newborn babies fed on milk would receive on average 0.13mg of phthalates for every kilogram of body weight. This is just above

the lowest level at which one of the phthalates in milk was found to damage the testicles of baby rats in studies carried out by the Medical Research Council.

But the Government played down the scare, which manufacturers said had been fuelled by "misleading reports".

The MAFF confirmed yesterday that it had held unpublished talks with manufacturers to discuss the situation and try to trace the source of the chemicals. A spokesman for the ministry said: "The tests showed that the levels of phthalates were slightly above the tolerable daily intakes of the chemicals, but there is no cause for concern." He stressed that the TDIs had a wide margin and said that mothers should continue to use formula milk.

"We recognise that it is essential to identify the sources of phthalates. We and the manufacturers are determined to reduce the levels in the milk but they pose no threat."

But Mr Griffiths said: "The public has a right to know which products are involved. The names should be published immediately. Parents are entitled to choose to avoid feeding these products to their babies."

Dr John Chisholm, deputy chairman of the BMA's GPs

committee, said he would be pressing for the Department of Health to issue immediate information to doctors.

"The trouble is that doctors, nurses, midwives and health visitors have been given no better information than members of the public. It is extremely unfortunate that we learn about it like this," he said. "This is another example of MAFF handling things in a way which really does place the public and health professionals in difficulty."

A spokeswoman for the Consumers' Association said: "If this is true it is an absolute outrage... This is yet more evidence of the urgent need for the establishment of an independent food agency."

But the manufacturers insisted their products were fine for mothers to feed their children. A spokeswoman for Milupa said: "Like all other companies we are trying to identify where the phthalates come from and are working to reduce them. They are still safe levels."

A spokesman for the Medical Research Council said: "This is obviously something to be concerned about, but the research is incomplete. Essentially our work was in animals, and there is as yet no evidence that the same thing applies to humans."

British climber missing on Everest

WILL BENNETT

A British climber is missing on Mount Everest after conquering the world's highest mountain. Louis Herrod became separated from two companions who managed to find their way back to their camp.

Last night a search was under way for Mr Herrod, 37, a photographer, who came originally from London but who now lives in South Africa. At least 10 people have died on the

sanit. Mr Woodall waited in vain for him there overnight while Ms O'Dowd went down to a lower camp with the guides. A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We are investigating reports of a missing Briton who was a member of the South African team climbing Everest."

The death toll amid ferocious storms on Everest in the past month has included three Indians, two Americans, two New Zealanders, one Austrian, one Japanese and one Taiwanese.

One of the victims was Rob

Hall, a leading mountaineer from New Zealand, who managed to say farewell by radio to his pregnant wife before dying of frostbite near the summit. Mr Hall, 35, the only Westerner to have climbed Everest five times, and his countryman, Andrew Harris, 31, who also died, were leading an expedition of paying clients.

Mountaineering "tourists" now pay more than £40,000 a head to climb Everest after the relaxation of numerical limits by the Nepalese Government.

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Ally Pally bill to cost £6m a year for 20 years

Haringey has the biggest local authority debt in the country, writes Paul Field

Haringey Council, north London, faces spending cuts of £6m a year for the next 20 years to pay the largest local authority debt in the country: losses of £55m from running and redeveloping Alexandra Palace. The council, which accepted liability for £50m this month, says budget cuts could affect services in the borough but refuses to be specific.

They could be more severe if the District Auditor does not allow Haringey to spread repayment costs over 20 years. Critics say Haringey brought the crisis on itself by mismanagement at the Muswell Hill site. Alexandra Park and Palace is a charitable trust: the council took over its running from the Greater London Council in 1980. The palace, birthplace of BBC television, was devastated by fire in the same year and rebuilding and operating costs paid by the council since have reached £54.7m.

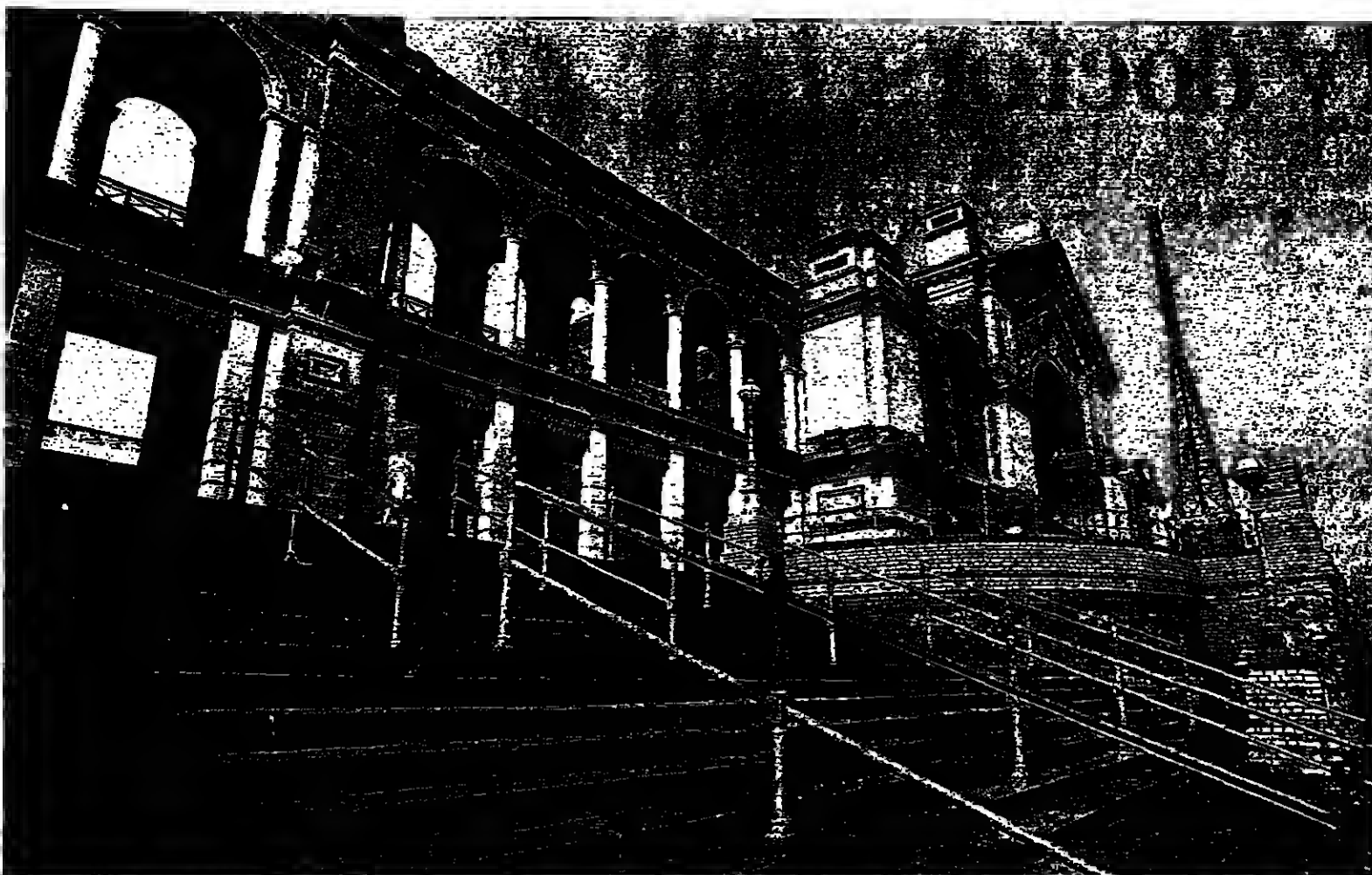
John Pirrie, director of corporate services, said Haringey was confident of spreading repayments over 20 years.

"We have already set £4.5m aside for this year ... It will be up to councillors to minimise the impact. With a net budget of £240m a year, it is not a significant percentage."

But Peter Forrest, one of two Conservative councillors, said: "Six million a year amounts to a lot of services."

And a Labour councillor, who refused to be named, said: "We are furious at how things have got out of control but as a Labour group we take collective responsibility. If we criticised colleagues publicly, Tory Central Office would have a field day."

The disclosure of a £6m annual budget reduction comes as selection for a private development at the palace and park draws to a close. The highest of the three shortlisted bids is worth £11.5m. Until now, development has been prevented because liability for the debt had not been resolved. Haringey has tried to offload the revenue debt of about £24m from the running costs of the palace and park and losses on



Costly business: Alexandra Palace, the £50m bill for which means cuts in services for local residents

Photograph: Philip Meech

Sorry history of fires, bombing and a Romany curse

1862: When the palace was planned, an angry Romany gypsy is said to have put a curse on the site after she was ejected from it. Since then it has been plagued by disaster and financial crisis.
1863: Inspired by the success of Crystal Palace, the Alexandra Palace company was formed to build a similar showpiece for mass entertainment and recreation.
1864: Construction begins. A year later the company is liquidated.
1873: The Palace opened on 24 May but is gutted by fire 16 days and 120,000 visitors later on 9 June.
1875: New building completed. New company bankrupt two years later.
1900: An Act of Parliament set up trustees to preserve palace and park.
First World War: Requisitioned for refugees and later as a POW camp.
After two decades of financial problems, the BBC moved in to launch first public television service.
Second World War: Bomb damage.
1946: Willis organ dismantled after severe winter.
1964: Administration passed to the new GLC. Racecourse and roller-skating rink closed.
1980: The GLC convinced Haringey Council to take over as trustees with an £8.5m downy. A fire on 9 July reduced half of the palace to a shell.
1983: Redevelopment plan approved.
1988: With the project out of control, development team replaced by Project Management International, which was asked to report on the overspend.
1991: PMI report critical of council. Powerhouse Consortium bid failed owing to unresolved debt liability.
1995: £100,000 bid to Millennium Commission failed despite £58,000 paid to Shandwick Consultants, which sent the MP David Mellor to help prepare bid.
1996: Despite claiming it was not liable for the full debt, Haringey picks up a £50m tab. Now set to choose a developer in a bid to make the site commercially viable.

evitable owing to the inexperience of the design team and the lack of financial control on the part of the council.

Haringey then attempted to

extricate itself from the debts by choosing a developer. However the move was blocked by the Attorney-General, who insisted the debt liability be re-

solved first. To claim an indemnity from the trust, Haringey had to demonstrate it managed the palace affairs prudently. However, the arguments ended when Haringey accepted liability for £50m after the chief executive, Gurbux Singh, received an eight-page letter from the Treasury Solicitor. The letter, leaked to the Independent, accused the council of failing to provide evidence to prove expenditure was properly incurred, taking a risk by proceeding with the restoration of the palace and of depriving the board responsible for running of the palace of its decision-making functions.

Haringey claims it only agreed to accept liability for £50m in order to clear the path for a development.

Even if a developer is chosen next week, the long-running saga of Ally Pally will run and run. Haringey has to get any development past the Charity Commission, through a public planning inquiry and approved by Parliament.

At every stage, it is likely to face fierce opposition, both locally and nationally.

University 'premier league' planned

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

A two-tier system of universities, with a premier league of ancient institutions receiving priority funding at the expenses of second division former polytechnics, is being planned by government advisers.

A paper to be published next month by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) will suggest that universities which offer the best teaching could be given priority in the race for expansion. Regional needs and the demand for places will also be taken into account.

The move will cause fury in the former polytechnics, where rapid expansion has led to complaints about crowded lecture theatres, overstretched library facilities and overworked tutors who cannot find time for their students' problems.

Inspections of teaching quality have led to six out of 10 departments in old universities being rated as "excellent", compared with just a quarter of those in new universities. The new universities say this is because the process discriminates against them.

Among the universities which would benefit under a two-tier system would be Oxford, Cambridge, York, Imperial College, London and Warwick. Losers could include the "new" universities of Derby, Greenwich and Bournemouth.

Ministers have already moved to produce league tables for teacher training. The funding council's move would make it easier to develop similar plans for universities.

The changes would also mean much closer scrutiny of the quality of universities, with ministers having more control over degree standards. An inquiry into this question is due to report later in the year. The new universities have re-

acted angrily to the proposals, with some accusing ministers of trying to nationalise the traditionally independent higher education system.

Brian Roper, vice-chancellor of the University of North London, said the proposals would open a gulf in the higher education system and would be bound to lead to the production of league tables.

"It is ironic that after a lengthy campaign to tear down the line which divided the older universities from the polytechnics, we now find that some factions intend to rebuild the Berlin Wall," he said.

A spokesman for the HEFCE denied that it would put the new universities at a disadvantage. "The principle is that institutions will be invited to bid for additional numbers, and these will be distributed on the basis of quality, demand and regional need. They will go to institutions where they have a good record," he said.

The expansion which took place between 1989 and 1995, in which student numbers rose from 760,000 to 1.2 million, was based on student demand and on which courses were the cheapest. In future, the universities will have to prove that they can offer a high-quality education at less cost.

They will be given four months to express their views before the council takes a final decision in November. They would be partly implemented next year and would be fully in place by the autumn of 1998. Although university recruitment has been frozen for the past two years because of funding constraints, the council assumes that there will be extra places before the end of the century. Numbers of pupils in secondary schools are going up, so universities will need to expand in order to keep the proportion going on to university at its current level of one third.

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news

GPs lighten the load for casualty doctors

Family doctors working in hospital casualty departments provide less expensive care and could even help to stem the tide of unnecessary attendances at accident and emergency departments, new studies have shown.

The evidence comes as A&E departments are facing repeated staffing crises because of changes to junior doctors' training and shortages of doctors while hospitals have faced a rising tide of emergency admissions in recent years.

A study in London at King's College Hospital in south London, where GPs have been used for more than six years to provide a primary care service in its A&E, shows that when they see patients with less serious conditions, the family doctors order fewer tests and X-rays, admit fewer patients and refer fewer to on-call teams than hospital doctors working in the same department.

Nicholas Timmins reports on a hospital that is cutting emergency admissions

Overall, the cost of treating each patient was between 35 and 40 per cent lower for GPs than for the usual casualty staff of junior doctors still in training.

Patients, however, were just as satisfied with the care they received, appeared to have equally good outcomes, and when followed up were more likely than those seen by the hospital doctors to say that in future they would treat themselves or visit a GP.

The results published in the *British Medical Journal* "support a new role for general practitioners" in casualty departments, according to Dr Edward Gluckman, the A&E consultant at King's College Hospital. The findings broadly match

those from a similar study of more than 4,500 patients at St James's Hospital in Dublin, which has also been published in the *BMJ*. The GPs "managed 900 emergency A&E attendances safely and used fewer resources than the usual accident and emergency staff", according to George Bury, Professor of General Practice at University College, Dublin.

At least in theory, they freed beds for waiting-list cases by admitting fewer patients, and on the measures available the patients they saw did just as well as those who received more intensive investigation from the usual casualty staff.

"Inappropriate use of accident and emergency departments has defied solution

throughout the world," Professor Bury says. All the measures that have been tried safely to reduce the numbers have failed. These have included giving frequent attenders advisory letters, allocating a GP to patients when they do not have one, and even changing the name "casualty department" to "accident and emergency" to make its purpose clear.

Using GPs might just have the potential to "break the cycle", the professor said, reducing inappropriate visits and over-use of hospital resources. If fewer unnecessary tests and X-rays were done, patients would no longer appear to have their need for a hospital visit confirmed.

That, he stressed, remained "speculation" and both he and Dr Gluckman warn that the overall impact of using GPs may be better quality and more cost-effective care rather than real overall savings.



On the spot: Dr Chabuk, a GP, examining Paul Stacey at King's College Hospital, south London. Photograph: Jane Baker

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Visiting team proves more cost-effective

Paul Stacey, 30, an unemployed steel fixer, is in the A&E department at King's College Hospital in south London, writes Nicholas Timmins.

He has a pain in his groin which developed overnight and is refusing to go away. But at King's, Mr Stacey is being seen not by a senior house officer or one of the other casualty doctors, but by a local GP, Dr Thamer Chabuk. He is one of 13 who between them provide a service from 10am to 10pm, seeing patients classified as non-urgent, most of whom could have been dealt with by their family doctor.

Mr Stacey tried that - but was put off by being told he would have to wait a fortnight for an appointment. He is far from an extreme case. The junior doctors in the department say that they have people coming in at four in the morning after waking up with sore throats - or people who arrive at night with lumps they have had for months but which they have suddenly decided they want looking at. Some have no GP.

Mr Stacey does need to see a doctor. Dr Chabuk prescribes an anti-inflammatory drug, gives him a letter for his family doctor and advises him to visit his GP if his condition does not improve with the treatment. Mr Stacey departs, a satisfied customer, saying he will do just that.

This GP-in-a-hospital service has just been shown by a study of 4,500 patients at King's to produce more cost-effective treatment for primary-care cases than the department's usual casualty officers, who on average order more tests, use more X-rays and admit more patients. Dr Chabuk, 45, and his col-

leagues can only guess why. Probably, he says, experience. "In this case," he said, "a senior house officer might have ordered a urine sample and perhaps a blood test. But I was happy to provide the treatment without the need for that. We are more used to these types of problems, from our experience in general practice."

A fully trained surgeon before he became a GP, Dr Chabuk is inevitably more experienced than the senior house officers who are only a year or two out of medical school.

The set-up has other advantages. The GPs help to train the junior doctors and students. They build closer links with consultants at the hospital. They provide a service that is plainly needed. And they can advise patients on how to use their GP.

In follow-up interviews, more of the patients seen by the GPs say that in future they would go to their family doctor rather than return to casualty, and more without a GP find themselves one. But Dr Edward Gluckman, the department's consultant, is cautious about whether the load on his department will be reduced.

"The problem is that there's a very high turnover in the local population and most of those who come here when they could go to a GP are one-offs. We don't have large numbers of people repeatedly using A&E for primary-care problems, so we haven't been able to show that using GPs changes patient behaviour. But it is possible that in an area with a less transient population you may have that kind of effect."

Hopes fade for missing seamen

The search for four men missing after their clam dredger capsized yesterday as coastguards said hopes of finding survivors were fading.

As divers were checking the wreckage of the 32-ft *Equinox* off the Ayrshire coast, a Sea King helicopter from HMS Gannet at Prestwick and the Strathclyde Police helicopter were released from the search.

A spokesman for Clyde Coastguard said it was unlikely they would be recalled.

"They have done all they can," he said.

The Royal Navy minehunter HMS *Canstock* was also released. Coastguard teams and the Troon lifeboat were continuing the search.

"There is always a chance, but the chances of finding them are diminishing," added the coastguard spokesman.

Meanwhile, a woman survivor was recovering in hospital after spending four hours in the water without a life jacket before reaching the shore and raising the alert.

At Ayr Hospital, doctors described how the 19-year-old woman had been admitted wrapped in blankets, and covered with a reflective aluminium blanket to keep up her body temperature.

"It is fortunate that she is a fit and healthy young woman. The water here isn't Arctic but it isn't warm," one doctor said.

"Not many of us would go for a swim in May. To survive that length of time in water is quite a triumph."

"It would require a lot of resolve and strength to stay in the water for four hours."

She was being treated with physiotherapy, and with antibiotics to clear a possible chest infection caused by inhaling sea water. The woman was "wrecked physically and upset emotionally", and exhausted.

"She clearly is upset. She has been asking, and we have been telling her, that as of now we have no news of the four people still missing from the incident," he said.

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'Sea Empress' legacy: Threat of catastrophe almost averted, though oil slick danger could imperil recovery

Golden age returning to polluted sands

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

As Pembrokeshire's main tourist season opened this weekend, the biggest fear about the *Sea Empress* oil disaster was fear itself.

Fear that visitors from England would stay away this half-term, and in the summer, fear that the oil, although now largely invisible, would continue to poison the area's seas and coast.

And fear that the long, uneasy accommodation between the dominant oil industry and the fishing and tourist trades had broken down for good.

Officialdom says the problems caused by 70,000 tonnes of North Sea crude which poured from the supertanker into and around Milford Haven in February have largely disappeared, thanks to an intensive, multi-million pound clean-up and nature's self-healing. Compensation is coming through for people and businesses who were harmed. Things are nearly back to normal.

The speed and scale of the recovery from the horrors of three months ago are astonishing. Once again, Britain's only coastal national park, which also has mainland Britain's biggest tanker port, looks clean and beautiful.

Just as happens every summer, the islands of Skomer and Skokholm are now teeming with squawking sea birds, nesting on cliffs in a way that makes them look like over-crowded tower blocks. Mainland beaches which looked like tar pits at the end of February are now golden. Rock pools, once covered by thick oil, have limpets, seaweed and sea anemones festooning their sides.

Last week the Welsh Office allowed fishermen to start catching fin fish once more. And Pembrokeshire County Council joined with Dyfed Powys Health Authority and the Environment Agency to declare that the sea was safe to swim in.

But not quite - for the oil keeps coming back in small doses. High tides and waves pluck it off the cliff-bottom rocks and beaches where it has lain for inaccessible for weeks.

Locals praise the council's promptness in spotting and mopping up these continuing, sporadic outbreaks. But if they carry on through the summer, then much of the hard cleaning work will have been in vain.

And while fish can once again be caught in the fisheries exclusion zone imposed after the disaster, the prohibition on molluscs and crustacea - more important to local fishermen - remains in force indefinitely. Levels of oil in these creatures are still too high.

These continuing problems are no surprise; this was a huge spill by any standards with dam-



New wave: Daytrippers watching as a surfer heads for the sea at Tenby, where the water has been cleared for bathing following the oil clean-up

Photographs: Rob Stratton

age on the same scale as that done by the wrecking of the *Torrey Canyon* 30 years ago.

The number of seabird corpses washed up, more than 4,600, was about three times as many as for the 1993 *Broer* oil spill in Shetland. Around 20,000 birds are thought to have died.

Bobby King, vice chairman of the South Pembrokeshire Hotels and Restaurants Association, is determinedly optimistic. His 13-room hotel in Tenby was fully booked for this weekend and the beaches looked great.

The memories of last March - "the phooe stopped ringing for a whole month" - are receding. But he grumbles at the expense of promoting the coast's comeback. The trade had hoped for a star visit, but was put off by the fees. "Noel Edmonds wanted £30,000," he said.

Nearby, in the beautiful, up-market seaside village of Manorbier, a hotelier who did not want to be named, was less cheery. "We're very unsure about this summer," he said. "I just wish no one would talk about the oil at all - that would be the best thing."

That morning, traces of oil had appeared on the beach there and been cleaned away. "They said the sea's safe for swimming, but I'm not sure I'd want my kids in the water," he said. "But the surfers were back here today and it was good to see them."

Dozens of biologists will be monitoring the coast lines rich and diverse marine life for years to come to see what harm was done.

Dr Peter Dyrinda, of Swansea University, will be

submitting the first proper biological assessment to the World Wide Fund for Nature in the next few weeks. "What struck me at first was how many things had survived severe oiling," he said. "But it's very easy to be falsely reassured. I'm sure many of the smaller, delicate things will have gone and not be back for years."

David Bray, secretary of the local fishermen's association, was looking forward to going back to sea today for the first time since the spill. But like most locals he is unwilling to forgive or forget and resents the Government's refusal to hold a public inquiry into the spill.

It began with a botched entry into the haven and was exacerbated by a bungled salvage operation. The official report from the Government's

Marine Accident Investigation Branch will not be published until late this year at the earliest.

"What a farce, what a circus," said Mr Bray. "I don't think people will ever really get over it."

The spill has transformed a local campaign against the proposed burning of Orimulsion, a cheap mix of heavy oil and water from Venezuela, at National Power's Pembroke power station.

Since the *Sea Empress* hit the rocks, there has been much more concern about the extra tanker movements that the project would bring about, and its impact on air quality. Mistrust with anything to do with oil has grown.

"You don't have to belong to Friends of the Earth to oppose it," said Mr Bray. "The rank and file just don't want it."



Flashback: Oil on the beach after the spillage in February which threatened to destroy wildlife and local businesses

Beauty spots access 'must be limited'

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Access to rural roads around beauty spots has to be limited and the Government should issue guidelines to ensure restrictions can be imposed, according to the Countryside Commission's transport officer, Ken Robertson.

Speaking at the launch of the RAC's report into the impact of car use on the North York Moors, Mr Robertson said that it was time the Government got to grips with the idea that some roads cannot cope with all the traffic that wants to use it. He said: "Restricting traffic demand must be seen as an acceptable aim and it is up to the Government to provide the lead."

The problem with trying to restrict usage of local roads in areas with considerable tourist traffic is that local people often object through fear that it will have an impact on business. A radical scheme to close some roads in the Lake District caused an uproar last year among residents and the plans had to be toned down. A revamped scheme is to be published next month by Cumbria County Council.

Mr Robertson said that if the Government stated clearly that it was desirable to restrict traffic use, then residents would be more likely to accept restrictions and the process of reversing the depopulation of the countryside could begin.

Initial measures could be simple ideas such as traffic calming, speed limits or restrictions on certain types of vehicles, but more radical measures could follow.

The Countryside Commission is to meet Department of Transport officials over the issue in the summer and more radical proposals to restrict traffic, such as charging for the use of roads may emerge. The Commission and environmental groups have been encouraged by the suggestion in the Government's Green Paper on transport published last month that local authorities may want to set up schemes to charge traffic where there is congestion.

While ministers seemed to be referring only to schemes in urban areas, the Department of Transport is known to be sympathetic to the idea of imposing some restraints on use of rural roads and once legislation was introduced, there would be nothing to stop rural authorities setting up charging schemes.

The RAC's report raises a number of possible ways of reducing traffic on the North York Moors such as setting up park and ride schemes and reducing car park charges for people staying for long periods.

Edmund King, the RAC's campaigns officer, said: "It is amazing that the majority of people do not go more than 200 yards from their cars. They indulge in a kind of car grazing stopping at car parks here and there and looking at the countryside through their front wind screens." He said that setting up car park schemes to discourage this car grazing would benefit the countryside.

□ Oxford Brookes University North York Moors National Park Impact of Car Usage Study 1994/5, RAC Foundation for Motoring and the Environment.

Song of skylark grows fainter as grasslands dwindle



Skylark: Intensive farming harms exuberant songbird

NICHOLAS SCHOON

In terms of sheer numbers lost, no British bird has suffered more than the skylark. In the last quarter-century the number of breeding birds fell by 1.6 million, roughly halving the population in the United Kingdom.

Similar declines have hit this bird of open country across much of Europe. It evolved in the steppes, then prospered in Britain because the traditional, varied farmlands provided food through the year. In winter huge numbers of European

skylarks join the permanently resident population.

But farming and farmland have changed enormously in just a few decades, and the ground-nesting skylark cannot survive at anything near its former high density.

For now, the species is still common and widespread, instantly recognisable from the way in which the male stakes territory and attracts a mate by hovering high and pouring out its long song. If you had to choose one sound to stand for the open countryside this would be it.

People have always taken the



noise to signify sheer exuberance - "larking about" - and the small bird has inspired poetry for centuries. But our ancestors also ate huge quantities of skylarks, and kept them caged and blinded for their song.

It is now one of 116 rare or fast declining animal and plant species for which rescue proposals have been drawn up and

endorsed by the Government and leading wildlife charities. For the skylark, the objectives are to reverse the population slump in the intensively farmed lowland areas where it has suffered most harm.

The switch to autumn-sown cereals has erased an important winter feeding ground: the stubble fields with their spilt grain. The springtime ploughing and sowing, now largely vanished, was probably also an important food source for the birds as it brought insect larvae and other small creatures to the surface. Grasslands were an impor-

tant habitat but a large proportion of these have been converted to crop-growing fields, and much of the remainder is managed in an intensive way that excludes skylarks. Early cuts of silage grass in May destroy their eggs and chicks, or leave them open to predators.

The skylark was thrown a lifeline in 1992 through the major reform of the Common Agricultural Policy which brought in mass set-aside of arable land. Millions of acres of crop fields were taken out of production in Britain, leaving weeds and grasses free to grow - which in

turn has provided seeds and insects for the skylarks. There are now the first signs that the population decline has slowed.

But set-aside may itself disappear within a few years. The conditions which led to its creation - huge crop surpluses and low international grain prices - have entirely disappeared.

The rescue plan calls for more research to establish exactly why the skylark copes so poorly with intensive modern agriculture, and "to consider" altering farming practices and subsidies once the lessons have been learnt.

The original Spring

ROLL-ON

PIZZA The first and still the best

news

Internet outrage as firm censors access

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

A British company providing connections to the Internet has sparked a furious row by blocking its users' access to discussion groups which Scotland Yard says contain obscene pictures.

However, other Internet providers - including the largest, Demon Internet - insist that they will not block access to any discussion groups, and will delete specific images only if the police tell them to.

The issue, which has exposed a widening gap in the companies' opinion of the existing law on computer obscenity, could have a dramatic effect on the rapidly growing Internet community in Britain.

Under existing obscenity laws, including the Child Protection Act and the Obscene Publications Act, it is a criminal offence to store child

pornography on any computer in Britain. Last Friday, Alban Fellows, a university researcher, was jailed for three years for running a child pornography library.

Technically, the managers whose computer systems contain newsgroups that include pictures of child pornography could be liable to arrest. Last week Shez Hamraill, chairman of Britain's 49-strong Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA), told members: "If the police tell you about something and you don't do anything about it, then you are liable to prosecution and the confiscation of your equipment."

On Scotland Yard's advice, Pipex, the second-largest Internet access company, has deleted a "small number" of the discussion groups, or "newsgroups", from its computers. "We are filtering out a number

of groups which are horrible," said David Barrett, the company's spokesman.

But James Gardiner, marketing manager of Demon, the oldest and largest of the British ISPs, with 65,000 users, defends its hands-off policy. "Our policy is that we are not responsible for putting it there. It's like the Post Office - they are not liable for the content of any package that's sent through the post. They are the carrier, and we argue that that is our role too," Demon, unlike Pipex, is not a member of ISPA.

The issue emerges because there are no checks on the source of data put on the Internet's discussion groups, or "newsgroups". There are roughly 16,000 newsgroups available globally on the Internet, which are for discussion and exchange of information.

Every day the users of the global network send roughly

2,200 megabytes of images or text to newsgroups, which are then passed internationally to other systems in the network. This means an image legal in one country could be passed to another where it is not.

Pipex, which has more than 10,000 users, is the second-largest ISP in Britain. It has been talking to Scotland Yard for about a year, and was advised of the offending newsgroups by the paedophilia and pornography squads.

The industry began only in 1992 when Internet connections became available outside academia. However, the legal ramifications of carrying pornography are unresolved. Mr Hamill said: "ISPA is negotiating with the police for concessions for this, so that they won't prosecute us for the odd occasion when we have something illegal - by accident - on our systems."



Loss of faith: Canon Ken Rogers and the new bullet-proof case holding the gold and ivory casket stolen from St Petroc's Church, Bodmin, Cornwall. The casket, worth £110,000, was dumped after thieves found it unsaleable. Photograph: Tim Cuff

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Research plea to drug giants

Drug companies are being invited to help establish a new institute devoted to research into largely ignored diseases which affect millions of people but attract little attention.

So-called "orphan" diseases, mainly found in the tropics, may be serious and life-threatening but do not attract major research funding because the huge cost involved is not justified by the potential return.

The World Health Organisation has urged Western governments and multinational companies to look beyond narrow self-interest amid a growing threat from new and re-emerging infectious diseases, including new killers such as the ebola virus, leishmaniasis which is spread by sandflies, and resistant diseases like cholera and tuberculosis.

Now a new initiative has come from Dr Trevor Jones, director-general of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) and a former research chief at the drug company Wellcome. He is proposing a joint venture between drug companies, medical charities, financial institutions such as the World Bank and the WHO to set up an international institute to find ways to tackle the diseases.

Part of the funding would come from the drug companies, which while not expecting to turn the results into financial

profit might see benefits to their image and relations with the governments of underdeveloped countries.

Dr Jones said: "The problem is that in the case of virtually all these diseases the likely revenue you could get from any equation cannot be balanced against the investment. You're talking about, typically, £200m over 12 years."

"The question is, what do you do about it?"

Dr Jones envisages an institution housing several hundred researchers. He could not predict the cost, but said that the companies involved would probably have to provide six-figure sums.

"All large companies give away a charitable component outside their core business," he said. "Part of the reason is corporate identity. Also a gesture like this would probably help improve relations in some parts of the world where there is a degree of resentment towards the big rich companies. There may also be spin-offs which could have unforeseen benefits."

A spokeswoman for the pharmaceutical giant Glaxo-Wellcome said: "We know and respect Trevor Jones and wouldn't rule out anything he proposed, but this is the first I have heard about the idea."

No one at the WHO was available for comment yesterday.

DAILY POEM

Telephone

Telephone told me that you were dead
Now I hate every telephone's stupid head
I'd rather sit here turning to a block of stone
Than pick up any snake of a telephone

Especially When It Snows

(for a boy)

especially when it snows
and every tree
has its dark arms and widespread hands
full of that shining angel food

especially when it snows
and every footprint
makes a dark lake
among the frozen grass

especially when it snows darling
and tough little robins
beg for crumbs
at golden-spangled windows

ever since we said goodbye to you
in that memorial garden
where nothing grew
except the beautiful blank-eyed snow

and little Caitlin crouched to wave goodbye to you
down in the shadows

especially when it snows
and keeps on snowing

especially when it snows
and down the purple pathways of the sky
the planet staggers like King Lear
with his dead darling in his arms

especially when it snows
and keeps on snowing

These two poems by Adrian Mitchell form a short cycle in memory of Boly Goodwin, the orphaned daughter of an old friend who became part of the Mitchell family, which appears at the end of his collected poems *Blue Coffee*. Boly's mother, Pauline Boly, died shortly after giving birth to her daughter in 1966 and the child was brought up first with her grandparents in Surrey and subsequently by her father, the literary agent Clive Goodwin, in London. By the age of 12, she had been robbed of him too, when he died suddenly and unexpectedly on a visit to Los Angeles. This "lovely, funny, very talented young woman" joined the Mitchell family household as a teenager, becoming, as Mitchell describes it with palpable pride, their "extra daughter". Her own life ended just months short of her 30th birthday on 11 November 1995.

Adrian Mitchell's *Blue Coffee: Poems 1985-1996* is published on Thursday by Bloodaxe at £8.95. It is a Poetry Book Society Choice.

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Children care units to get 20% more beds

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The number of intensive-care beds for critically ill children is to be raised by 20 per cent over the next year, Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, is to announce later this week.

At the same time, the eight National Health Service regions are to set up a bed bureau by next winter so that doctors have only to make one call to find the nearest available bed when their local unit is full.

The measures – plus a new drive to train more paediatric intensive-care nurses – follow the critical shortage of paediatric intensive-care beds revealed last winter when hospitals repeatedly had to turn away seriously ill children.

Mr Dorrell will announce the outcome of a report he ordered from the NHS Executive after the death of 10-year-old Nicholas Geldard last December. He collapsed in Stockport, was admitted to its infirmary and then transferred to Stepping Hill Hospital and Hope Hospitals before being ferried, already brain dead, across the Pennines to Leeds after hospitals in Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield were unable to take him because their intensive-care beds were full.

In a survey by the *Independent* in January, hospitals in Leeds, London, Brighton, Bristol and Sheffield and Nottingham all said they had been forced to turn children away, in some cases on dozens of occasions. A count by the Labour Party last month, whose findings the Department of Health did not challenge, suggested 300 children had been turned away in

the first four months of the year.

Little or no extra central funding is being made available to improve the situation, but Mr Dorrell is expected to announce that NHS trusts have plans to create another 55 intensive-care and high-dependency beds over the next year, a 20 per cent increase over the current 249.

Hospitals, however, still face major worries over how to staff them, reporting either difficulties in recruitment or absolute shortages of intensive-care nurses. Funds for more training will be made available and Yvonne Munnies, the Chief Nursing Officer, is to head a task force charged with identifying why too few nurses train in the specialty and then stay with it.

The Royal College of Nursing has criticised trusts for refusing to support the training and for not giving nurses time off to study for the qualifications needed.

How many of the new beds will be available by the winter, when demand for them usually peaks, is not yet clear, but ministers believe a bed bureau – already operated in some areas, such as Birmingham – will make it far easier for vacancies to be located.

Mr Dorrell's insistence that the extra beds – which cost around £250,000 a year to run – should be provided by the NHS adjusting its priorities within existing resources is likely to draw fire.

And the creation of a bed bureau for paediatric cases is likely to renew demands for similar arrangements for adult intensive care and for emergency beds for the mentally ill. Without action at ministerial or regional level, doctors say, such arrangements are almost impossible to set up.



Face of history: Lucheese's plaster cast of Bonnie Prince Charlie – expected to sell for between £5,000 and £8,000

Photograph: Philip Meech

A new beginning for the Old Pretender

Bonnie Prince Charlie's death mask (left), which formed the basis for Canova's Vatican statue of the Old Pretender, is to be auctioned – together with "a locket of his facial hair" – at Christie's in Glasgow on 12 June.

The plaster cast was made by the Roman modeller Bernardine Lucheese shortly after the would-be king died, in January 1788. It was commissioned with the intention of helping Canova – a sculptor whose work is said to equal that of the ancient Greeks – who later undertook the magnificent Stuart monument in St Peter's Basilica.

When Lucheese moved from Rome to Glasgow in 1839, he brought the mask with him, and it was subsequently used as the basis for two further sculptures of Prince Charles by Scottish artists.

Rail pay offer hard to swallow

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Some people over know when they are well off. Train catering staff were offered the opportunity to "write your own pay cheque", but they proved ungrateful.

A righteously indignant manager, having offered them a new sky's-the-limit pay deal, has since written to employees telling them to leave if they don't like it.

There were however a number of small difficulties with the offer, which replaced a £3-an-hour wage rate.

The main problem was that the new deal cut their wages to one of the lowest hourly rates in the country.

Employees were provided with a smart uniform, a trolley laden with "high quality" beverages and comestibles and the opportunity of boarding a train and selling their wares to grateful passengers.

The sky was indeed the limit, but "trolley stewards" had to sell more than £50 worth of goods in a day to qualify for a commission of 20p in the pound. If the magical £50 sales was not breached – and according to employees this was frequently the case – then they could end up with £10 for a nine-hour day. That works out at £1.11 an hour.

Chelfields, the catering company offering the jobs on regional trains in the Manchester, Sheffield and Hull areas, was not prepared to guarantee any pay at all. If stewards turned up for duty, and through "circumstances beyond our control" management was unable to provide work, they were paid nothing.

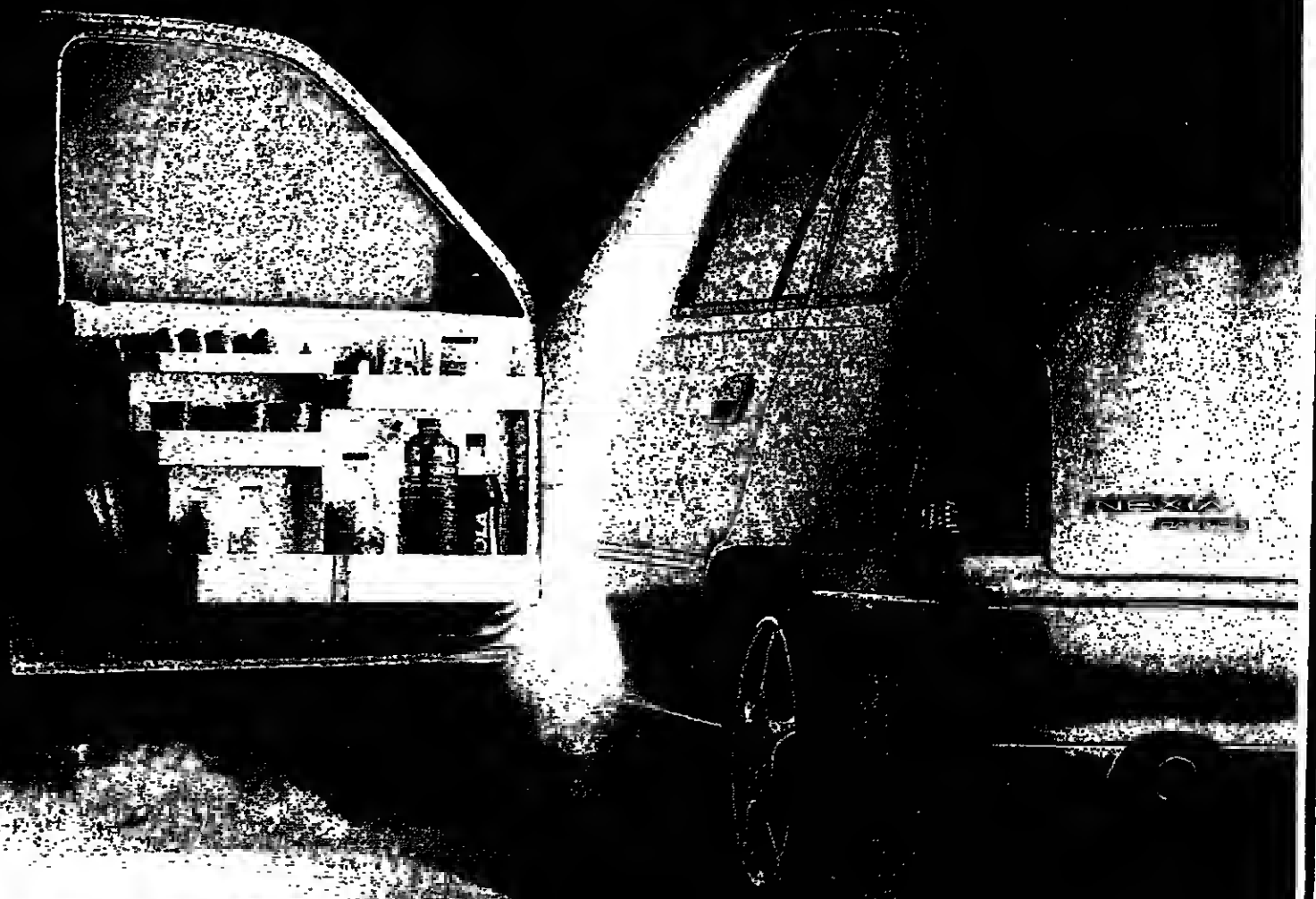
As part of the three-monthly contract Chelfields also reserved the right to search workers' belongings and prevented them from speaking to outsiders about their employment conditions on pain of dismissal.

When news of dissatisfaction reached Chelfields the company told its employees: "To those who are unhappy with the job, our advice to you is clear. LEAVE (you will not be missed). And do not disrupt those of us who are trying to better both the way we work and our service to our customers."

Staff were told that unimpressive profit returns had prompted the new offer and John Pender, operations director, said that most employees would earn more than the basic.

However, Chris Pond, director of the Low Pay Unit, said the new deal put the job among the 10 worst paid in the country.

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Russia's old capital rejects return to past

HELEN WOMACK
Yaroslavl

The historic city of Yaroslavl defies the stereotype of the deeply conservative Russian provincial city, which is stuck in the mud and dreaming of a return to the predictability of Communism.

In last December's parliamentary elections, Yaroslavl delivered one of the biggest votes in the country for Yabloko, the party of the liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky.

If local opinion polls are to be trusted, the city looks set to give Boris Yeltsin a strong vote of confidence in the coming presidential elections to continue his reforms.

At the same time, a minority of Communists and nationalists remains active in Yaroslavl. Adverts for Japanese audio and video equipment are plastered over with handwritten diatribes about how "so-called democrats" have "covered the Motherland in filth" and "given freedom to criminals".

People are courteous on the elegant streets but just under the surface the tension is tangible between those who retain faith in reform and those who have become embittered.

Zinaida Ilycheva, standing in the doorway of her private jewellery boutique, was about to give me an interview - and I imagine that she would have expressed pro-market views - when an old woman standing nearby started to shout about the "destruction" of the country. The nervous shopkeeper slipped inside and the interview was off.

As in the rest of Russia, the political split in Yaroslavl more or less coincides with the generation divide. Those young enough to have a hope of seeing reform bear fruit one day want to press on.

"Life's hard but, since we've started, it does not make sense to go back," said Elia Vorontsova, a recent graduate in computer science who is earning the equivalent of \$100 (£65) a month selling drinks from a tiny kiosk in the wall of one of the city's medieval towers.

But old people who have known little but totalitarian

Historic city looks set to defy swing towards Communism

rule and will not live to see the possible good side of capitalism are nostalgic for the social safety nets which Communism guaranteed.

"[The Communist leader Gennady] Zyuganov gets my vote," said Antonina Fyodorovna, a pensioner who was involved in a strange bazaar on the road into Yaroslavl.

The villages of wooden cottages, where normally there is nothing for sale except radishes and spring onions, were hung from end to end with garishly coloured, Chinese-

Moscow, so liberal? History is one important factor. Yaroslavl, which has the tourist potential of a city like York, was briefly the capital of Russia during the "Time of Troubles", the period of uncertainty after the death of the dictatorial Ivan the Terrible, which in many ways resembles the chaotic post-Soviet Union today.

Yaroslavl boasts that it produced the first Russian-language theatre and the first Russian newspaper. The Orthodox Church is strong here. During the Civil War, many peo-

ple in Yaroslavl were involved in an anti-Bolshevik uprising. All this helps to explain the strength of a local intelligentsia which has an anti-Communist tradition.

Gusman Kadirov, the ethnic Tatar editor of *Gorodskie Novosti*, says the journalists of Yaroslavl, which now has an impressive total of 20 newspapers, were particularly committed to glasnost.

In the Soviet Union's first free elections, held when Mikhail Gorbachev was still in power, Yaroslavl returned a democratically inclined local council. Mr Yeltsin closed it down in 1993 along with councils across the country which he suspected of supporting his opponents in the White House (the former national parlia-

ment). But Viktor Volonchunas, the man he appointed to run Yaroslavl, has since been confirmed in office in democratic elections and he seems popular.

The face of Yaroslavl has certainly changed dramatically. When I visited it in 1989 the food shops were nearly empty. In 1993, when I covered the election campaign of a famous hypnotist who was running for Mr Zhirinovskiy's party (he did not get in) the shops still had little to offer and the most exciting thing you could do on a wet afternoon was weigh yourself.

You can still weigh yourself in Yaroslavl. But now you can also buy popcorn and cosmetics and books which range from *All About The Internet* to *Tantric Sex* in jolly little street kiosks. The shops are full of mostly imported food at near-Moscow prices, which is expensive for most wage earners but at least it is available.

Industry in Yaroslavl has not developed under Yeltsin as well as the retail trade. But at least the city's factories are operating and not standing idle, as they are in many parts of Russia.

The mostly female workers pouring out of the Yaroslavl tyre plant at the end of the day shift testified to the factory's survival, if not its success.

"We have got by with natural wastage rather than mass redundancies," said Vladimir Novos, the technical manager of what is now a share company.

He said the 5,000-strong work force, which has been pared down by about one-third since Soviet times, had received more regular wages than most Russian workers, who often wait months for their pay.

Mr Novos said if his factory and Russian industry as a whole were to develop, taxes ought to be cut and applied to everyone equally. It is one of the reforms for which Mr Yavlinsky argues.

"At present, small firms dodge tax and we get hit," he said.

Then foreigners might be interested in investing here. "We need the West to help us create jobs, not just flood us with goods. The modern world is small. The West also has a responsibility to keep reform alive in Russia."



Going for a song: Yeltsin jokes with members of a folk group in the northern city of Arkhangelsk

Photograph: AP

Yeltsin breaks ice in Arctic town

PHIL REEVES
Vorkuta

There were no smiles, no cheers, not even a wave. Most of the gazes that greeted Boris Yeltsin's motorcade as it swept through this coal-mining town were frostier than the Arctic tundra that surrounds it.

Such was the hush along Lenin Street that a less determined politician would have headed back to Moscow, abandoning Vorkuta, a former gulag where thousands of Stalin's prisoners perished, as a lost cause.

But with three weeks to go before the first round of the

presidential election, Mr Yeltsin is proving nothing if not dogged. He arrived knowing he had lost the support of most miners in Vorkuta, a town so fed up with late wages and declining living standards that it turned to the ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy at the December parliamentary election.

In what is now his standard campaign tactic Mr Yeltsin sought to dazzle them with personal flamboyance and hard cash. Cladding himself in miner's overalls and a hard hat, he set off down a coalmine, 700m below the permafrost. Even if it did not add to the strain on his heart, it certainly tired his

economic advisers, who have watched him dole out one bag of gold after another in the pursuit of votes. His latest promise was to subsidise holidays in the southern sunshine for the children of Vorkuta, a move calculated to play on the nostalgia for the perks of the Soviet era. On the eve of his visit, the miners' unpaid February wages also suddenly materialised.

It may pay dividends. Vorkuta has little evident appetite for his opponent, Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the Communists who claims to represent a national-patriotic bloc. Though angry with Yeltsin, the town may yet turn to him again.

He has another potential ace within his grasp. Last night, it was unclear if talks between the President and the Chechen leader, Zelimkhan Yanderbiyev, would go ahead in Moscow today. But, although they are both ridden by divisions, Chechens and Russians seem inclined to go ahead soon.

Even if negotiations fail, they will help the Kremlin foster the impression of progress on resolving the war. The Chechens, mindful that this is their best chance for a deal, will have placed themselves in the strange position of delivering a triumph to the President who destroyed their capital, Grozny.

Rock becomes a hard place for smugglers

ELIZABETH NASH
Gibraltar

Julian misses his glory days as a smuggler. "It was like being in a film, being in the SAS without having to do all the training, playing cat-and-mouse with the authorities."

He takes me down to Water Gardens marina, in Gibraltar, and points out a handful of scruffy fast launches amid the scores of glossy pleasure yachts and speedboats. Some are laid up on blocks, most of those in the water are out of action, he says. A year ago I saw more than 60 lined up and ready to go.

It is early evening. We sit outside the Pig and Whistle pub while a stiff easterly wind, the *levante*, whips up the waves in the bay. Julian, who is in his mid-thirties, ran tobacco to Spain for six years before his year-long imprisonment following various complaints from Madrid about alleged illegal activities on the Rock.

"I had a Boston whaler," he says nostalgically. "We had this Spanish guy from La Alunara and he would come over, or give us the money to buy 50 or 60 cases of cigarettes. Winston, Camels from the shops or the warehouses. And we would spend the better part of the night delivering it to him. My boat could take 25, 30 cases at a time. We'd wait for the right window of opportunity and put them in."

If the landing place was clear, it only took a phone call then 15 minutes to get it or-

ganised and the boat would be loaded and zipping away. On a good night I could make £500, a grand or two grand on an exceptional night. But that might be once in a month.

"As far as I'm concerned, it was an honest day's work. We weren't robbing anybody."

Did he ever carry anything other than tobacco? "No, no," he says, looking askance at my tape-recorder.

"Smuggling is part of our history," he says. "It's in our blood. One of my ancestors broke the Spanish blockade by asking Lord Nelson to lend him a couple of British naval frigates to see the garrison through. He brought water, fruit, meat from Morocco, a couple of times."

From the Pig and Whistle, we climb aboard his motorbike and drive to the top of the Rock. There is an almost 360-degree view. The Atlantic to the west, Africa to the south, the Mediterranean, and Spain.

"We used to come up here with our binoculars and our walkie-talkies, to check the *guardia* in Spain and give the go-ahead when the coast was clear. If tourists came by, we'd tell them we were security, or bird watching."

So what was he going to do now? "Oh I'm studying now to get business communication skills, doing a course to become a legal secretary, because I want to go into business." What business? "Canned tomatoes and fish from Morocco. You know, import-export."

Turkey's moral framework crumbles under weight of corruption and deceit

HUGH POPE
Istanbul

The Turks have a saying for their predicament: the water is running from everywhere, except from the taps.

Any lingering doubts about the crumbling moral framework of republican politics were put to rest by the latest star of the soap opera that passes for public life in Turkey.

"My husband is an honest man. I am proud of him. Our society needs such honest, straight-talking people," Zuhre Parsadan told a mob of Turkish reporters after her husband's arrest.

"But he was a swindler," demonstrated one reporter. Mr Seluk Parsadan had boasted of his success in conning the equivalent of £50,000 from Tansu Ciller - part of a mounting controversy surrounding her two-and-a-half-year tenure as prime minister, until this March.

"Yes, I know. But all he did was change his name," said Mrs Parsadan, chic, poised and utterly unfazed behind her dark glasses. "Apart from that, he's straight. He just convinces people easily. He will defend himself in court and win."

Turkey has become so punch-drunk with corruption and slurs that Mr Parsadan, fearing that he would be murdered, spent weeks trying to persuade a dubious media that he was not a real swindler at all.

Politics is no different. Turks watched in disbelief as the two centre-right coalition partners in government insulted and

conspired against each other, as if this had no bearing on their right to lead the country.

Mr Ciller, who pulled out of the coalition early on Saturday, had been accused by Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz of embezzling £6,000,000 just before leaving office. She called him a "mud-slinger" who should "resign immediately" since their two-month-old government had "achieved nothing".

The gutsy Mrs Ciller can hardly talk, however, having failed while in office to implement any of her sweeping promises to reform the economy, to give university education to all or to fund an economic revival of the Kurdish south-east.

One caricaturist draws her faceless, a visual pun on the Turkish for bare-faced lying.

Meanwhile, Turkey's two rival left-wing parties are involved in an equally sordid and irresponsible battle. And as faith in the republican system subsides, public opinion is swinging towards the pro-Islamic Welfare Party.

But only up to a point. Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan is also behaving shifty, in between a new round of outrageous slurs against Armenians and Jews.

Despite his vicious attacks on Mrs Ciller for her millions, he and his brother have become rich land-owners in a way difficult to explain with throw-away comments like "I have a summer house and a winter house. The rest is just palaver".

And, despite their supposedly irreconcilable political and



Tainted: Tansu Ciller (left), the former prime minister embroiled in a bribes scandal, Mesut Yilmaz, her accuser (centre), and the wealthy Welfare Party leader, Necmettin Erbakan



moral differences, the Turks watched in amazement as Mr Erbakan and Mrs Ciller quietly agreed to bury the hatchets until after a round of municipal by-elections on 2 June.

They may even be plotting to form a new government, thus allowing Mrs Ciller to break her one remaining campaign promise - never to deal with the Islamists - and forgetting the insults she slung at Mr Yilmaz for doing exactly the same thing.

The Turks have to look a long way back to the glory days of the

early republic to remind themselves how simple and relatively clean things used to be, since the economic miracle and get-rich-quick mentality inspired by the late Turkish leader Turgut Ozal is also turning out to have had a seamy side.

One of his state bank chiefs, shot and wounded by a mafia hitman and sent to jail for accepting bribes, has now disappeared. He is presumed to have joined a number of other "princes" of the Ozal period, including his son Ahmet, living abroad due to allegations of corruption.

Turkish newspapers showed a link between Mr Ozal's family and a well-known Turkish gangster in the mafia shooting case, but even the Turkish underground is getting sloppy. When someone was hired to kill one of those implicated in the case, it all went wrong.

The press was tipped off the day before, inspiring the police to check the courtroom where the murder was about to take place.

The premier made the comments, his first in public on the deepening political crisis, shortly before a cabinet meeting in Diyarbakir, the mainly Kurdish south-east's administrative capital, on possible solutions to the 12-year-old armed Kurdish rebellion.

Nobody in Turkey has yet concentrated their minds on this extraordinary admission that, 73 years after the founding of the secular republic, it is considered normal for secret service money to be deployed to keep the Islamists at bay.

Yilmaz vows to stay in government

Diyarbakir, Turkey (Reuters) - The Turkish Prime Minister, Mesut Yilmaz, said yesterday that his conservative government would remain in power, despite losing the support of coalition partner Tansu Ciller.

"We will continue to be the government ... until a new

government formula becomes clear," Mr Yilmaz said.

He challenged the Islamic Welfare Party to carry out a threat to remove him from power. "I am not going to resign," he insisted. "Let all the ministers resign or let them table a censure motion."

The premier made the com-

ments, his first in public on the deepening political crisis, shortly before a cabinet meeting in Diyarbakir, the mainly Kurdish south-east's administrative capital, on possible solutions to the 12-year-old armed Kurdish rebellion.

Nobody in Turkey has yet concentrated their minds on this extraordinary admission that, 73 years after the founding of the secular republic, it is considered normal for secret service money to be deployed to keep the Islamists at bay.

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مكتبة القرآن

Floods deepen misery of last Stalinists

North Korea: will looming famine lead to talks or to aggression?

TERESA POOLE
Peking

During the Korean War, hungry North Koreans used to forage for Chok, a deep root which could be dried and cut up for food. Nearly half a century later, United Nations aid officials, who have been operating out of Pyongyang, say some

'There is a very definite anxiety among people... the lean period is from now up to the next harvest, which is October... but they still believe in their system'

North Koreans are once again relying on roots and wild grasses to stave off hunger. In all, edible grass, is gathered by work teams, and what another wild plant, is used for salad, medicine, and soup, said Trevor Page, who last week finished six months heading the UN World Food Programme's (WFP) office in Pyongyang. "They mix the wild foods with whatever rice and maize they do get," he explained.

Earlier this month, the WFP put out a "special alert" that the food situation in North Korea was becoming critical following recent cuts in official grain rations. Mr Page described the scene in parts of the country-

side: "We saw groups of 100 or so people foraging in the middle of nowhere. It was an organised work unit, going out on a Sunday... On top of that, in every town, groups of 20 to 100 people, mainly women, stand around with little things for sale, like cigarettes, matches, ball-point pens, notebooks, scarves and beancakes." Illegal trading like this is one of the few ways to raise money to buy food sold unofficially by farmers.

Much uncertainty, and some scepticism, remains in the international community about the extent of the food shortages in the world's most secretive country. Aid agencies are not, for instance, provided with details of North Korea's national food stocks, or the army's supplies. But they have been given access to rural areas normally out of bounds to Western visitors. Mr Page said: "The food shortages are really severe and widespread." Other relief officials echoed his view. "The situation is deteriorating and that is very obvious because the lean period is from now up to the next harvest, which is October," said Kathi Zellweger, of Caritas Hong Kong.

North Korea's shrinking economy was further hit by floods last summer which have left 100,000 people still homeless and 40,000 hectares of farmland unusable. So how is the population of the world's last Stalinist regime reacting to the threat of starvation? "There is a very definite anxiety among people. They are not getting enough of the basics," Mr Page said. Official food rations have virtually halved since December, and some people are receiving



as little as 250g a day. A couple of times, WFP food aid trucks were mistakenly directed to the wrong destinations, and local villagers were aghast when the vehicles turned around to leave without unloading. "They were harangu-

ing and harassing the [North Korean] officials," said Mr Page. But he stressed that he had not heard of any breakdown in public order. "We have not seen any food riots or heard of any. Dissatisfaction with the government? No, you just do

not hear that... They believe in their system and want to preserve it." The next few months could be critical: North Korea has no money to import food commercially, and foreign aid has tapered off. "We are trying to

prevent a catastrophe occurring," Mr Page said. According to him, hillside trees have been cut down and bartered with Chinese companies for food. WFP estimates that 150,000 tonnes of food a year is coming in across the Chinese border in exchange

for timber, scrap metal, mineral water, shellfish, human hair and rabbit skins. Factories, most of which have stopped working because of fuel shortages, are being stripped for scrap metal which can be bartered, he said. Reliable information about

Recent flood damage in North Hwanghae Province: North Korea lost 40,000 hectares of farmland to flooding last year Photograph: Trevor Page/Hutchison

the true food situation in North Korea is crucial, not only to decisions about humanitarian aid, but also to United States attempts to force Pyongyang to the negotiating table.

President Clinton last month proposed four-party talks between the US, China and the two Koreas to seek a permanent peace on the peninsula. Yesterday, the US congressman Bill Richardson arrived in Pyongyang to see if he could persuade North Korean leaders to support the initiative. While the US awaits a response, its food aid to North Korea is in effect on hold. The debate among analysts is whether looming famine will force North Korea to negotiate, or whether it could perhaps prompt the Stalinist country to attack South Korea in a last desperate showdown. At a meeting earlier this month, the US, South Korea, and Japan held out the carrot of significant economic aid, if Pyongyang agreed to the talks.

The unpredictability of the situation was demonstrated last Thursday when North Korean ships briefly encroached into South Korean waters, and a North Korean Air Force pilot made a daring defection to Seoul. It was the first defection of a pilot since 1983, and a big intelligence coup. Meanwhile, the South Korean public was amazed at the state of the pilot's underwear and what that suggested about North Korea's economic woes. He did not have proper socks and was wearing jogging trousers under his flight suit to keep warm at high altitudes.

Israeli opponents keep up their guard in TV debate

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

The answers sounded carefully scripted. In the only television debate of the Israeli election campaign, Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, and Benjamin Netanyahu of the right-wing Likud party, searched for each other's weak points and protected their own. Asked about his age Mr Peres, 72, said: "If you had to elect a male model and not a prime minister, then age would be an issue."

Mr Netanyahu was asked about his admission on TV three years ago that he had committed adultery and was being blackmailed by political opponents who had a video proving the liaison. Did it show that he could not take decisions under pressure?

Balancing gingerly between defence and counter-attack Mr Netanyahu replied: "It hurt me, it hurt my wife, it hurt my family. It was a mistake. But the mistake that Mr Peres made... hurts the whole people of Israel. People here live in fear." Then with a touch of self-pity he added: "This whole campaign has been an attack on my personality, my family, my patriotism."

It may not change many votes on 29 May but it does not have to, Israeli elections are notori-



Battle on the box: Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and Shimon Peres before yesterday's debate Photograph: AFP

ously difficult to forecast because a large part of the electorate is difficult for pollsters to penetrate. The priorities of Russian immigrants, Israeli-Arabs and the ultra-orthodox - a third of the 4 million electorate - differ from the rest of Israelis. The format also restricted debate. Held in the Labour party headquarters in Tel Aviv the questions came from a moderator with only limited right of reply. But the Likud leader - hammering away on

the issue of personal security - appeared more aggressive and better prepared than the Prime Minister.

Mr Peres began by saying the election was about the peace accords between increasing Israeli settlements, which would bring back the Intifada (Palestinian uprising), and a process which would bring peace to the Middle East. Mr Netanyahu said that as a result of Mr Peres's peace policy "our children are afraid to get on a bus". Their se-

curity was in the hands of Yasser Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organisation leader.

Mr Netanyahu said he would return security to the army and the Shin Bet security forces. This was dangerous ground for him because Israelis do not want their soldiers back in Gaza and Nablus. When the moderator asked if Mr Netanyahu would send troops back into Palestinian cities he replied "my experience with the Arabs" showed that they respected strength.

Part of the debate was taken up by an exchange of allegations over Jerusalem. Mr Netanyahu pledged to close down Orient House, the Palestinian centre in East Jerusalem. Mr Peres said that a united Jerusalem will remain the capital of Israel.

Mr Peres is most vulnerable on the charge that after he promised peace 59 people were killed in Israel by four suicide bombers in February and March. It is the explosions which revived Mr Netanyahu's campaign. From 20 per cent behind he narrowed the gap to only 4 per cent which is within the margin of error given by pollsters.

Meanwhile Israel closed its borders to almost all Palestinians yesterday to prevent attacks by Muslim militants, according to an army spokesman.

Commentary, page 15

Housewife makes waves as the nation's on-air shrink

LOCAL HEROES

No 18:
Laura Schlessinger

Maybe there's hope for American radio after all. Last month the Washington news and talk station WWRC took the born-again Christian, rabidly right-wing Ollie North out of its late afternoon prime-time slot and replaced him with Laura Schlessinger.

The former hero of Iran-Contra is said to be not best pleased by the demolition, but legions of listeners in the capital region were delighted. "Doctor Laura" these days is the hottest thing on talk radio, a hectoring personal therapist to a nation confused.

Such is the peculiar destiny of a 49-year-old New Yorker transplanted to Los Angeles, who really is a doctor in physiology, with a licence to practise marriage- and family-counselling.

Her radio career began in 1979, when she called a show to answer an on-air question: would she rather be a divorcee or a widow? A widow, she replied.

The host loved it and kept her on the air for 20 minutes. By 1990 she had her own show. But fame and fortune notwithstanding, the woman who introduces herself on air as "My kids' mom" is in one sense less much of her audience: a slightly frazzled suburban housewife

with a 10-year-old son, who is trying to cope with life's problems.

She will not discuss her political sympathies, on air or off. But Schlessinger admits that on a liberal-conservative scale of 1 to 10, her views on social issues rate "six to 10" - pro-life, pro-marital chastity and against divorce. But that hardly makes her a paid-up member of the Rush Limbaugh/Ollie North/Gordon C Liddy school of broadcasting, in which a sentence that does not revile the Clintons is a sentence wasted.

Ultimately she may have more staying power than any of them. Already she is reckoned to command a national weekly audience of 10 million and growing on 250 stations across the country.

Only Limbaugh does better, and Schlessinger is pulling ahead of him in some markets. The Republican revolution in Congress may be coming apart at the seams, but if anything, Schlessinger's family-value

'Hosts need to become more personal; there's too much yelling and screaming. It's boring and I don't want to feel angry'

themes and her mantra that personal responsibility is all, are gaining ground. Slightly tattered at the edges, they are now mainstream Clintonism, embraced by a White House which knows a good election idea when it sees one.

No sin is greater than to bemoan your own problems. Not Doctor Laura that whining, blame-anyone-but-yourself mentality that infests modern American culture, the national propensity to wallow in self-pity.

"Nothing is considered wrong any more," she says. "We need to re-establish the concept of shame."

By coincidence or otherwise, it is exactly the stricture of Colin Powell, before he became the most popular non-candidate for the US presidency in history.

Any lingering doubts about her philosophy are banished by the titles of two books she has spun off from the radio show, *Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives*, and *How Could You Do That? The Abdication of Character, Courage and Conscience*.

But she is less polemical than many of her colleagues: "Hosts need to be more personal; there's too much yelling and screaming. It's boring, I don't want to feel angry."

But she very often sounds like it, scolding with a venom uncommon for an agony aunt. A woman complains about an errant husband: Doctor Laura's response is usually, why did you pick him in the first place?

The formula works. It's part showbiz, but leavened with the impression that she really wants to help. Rarely is she attacked for hypocrisy, although her own private life is less than picture perfect (Schlessinger is on her second marriage, and reportedly estranged from her mother).

The greater risk is a lapse into endless, self-righteous moralising that sooner or later would drive away her audiences. But at the moment there's no sign of it. In America these days, true love is tough love.

Rupert Cornwell

Wine on the list as crooks strike rich seam in urban underbelly

Leafing through the local paper on a recent visit to Britain was a depressing experience. Northwest London came across as a non-stop crime area: from muggings to burglaries to robberies with violence, no one and nothing seemed sacred. What a contrast to Paris, where street crime seems mostly to stop at pickpocketing, and burglary is banished to the no-go areas of housing estates.

How wrong can you be. A few days later, safely back in Paris, I received the following phone call at the office: "The good news is that the electricity has fixed the socket; the bad news is that all the wine has been

stolen. All the caves have been ransacked."

Like a great many hocks of Paris flats, our's has a basement with a corridor of caves, one or two allocated to each flat. As well as the hits and pieces of wood, paint and carpet you might one day need, the cave holds bicycles and skis and, of course, the wine. Even in Paris, people tend not to buy a bottle or two to go with dinner, but to fetch one from the many dozen bought at the vineyard and stored in the cellar.

These cellars offer rich pickings. However they are secured, they will always be vulnerable. Burglars, unless they are very

unlucky, can have the basement to themselves for hours on end. Our burglars apparently started their pillage with the first-floor offices on Sunday night, then came back the next evening for the caves.

The locks of each cave door were brutally smashed. The only mystery is how the felons were able to leave with all their booty, though the fact that the Renault Espace is now the most stolen car in France may go some way towards the explanation. The elderly concierge, locked away in her ground-floor cubbyhole, swears she heard and saw nothing. "It's the drug addicts," she said. "Bound

to be. What is this city coming to?"

For the police and insurance company, this was a routine crime. "So it was the cave, was it," said the friendly officer at the local police station, courteously helping Madame with her inadequate crime vocabulary and apologising for not being computerised and having to fill out the form in long-hand.

"Smashed the locks did they? Were the doors reinforced? Well, it doesn't make much difference actually; they just

spring them anyway." No, they would not be coming to investigate, no point.

Cave robbery is a city crime of utter banality. It teaches you to keep all your wine receipts for the insurance (the French do, for years afterwards), it keeps the locksmiths in business, and it goes entirely unreported.

Crime in the countryside is a different matter. First, despite a common view to the contrary, it does exist. Second, much of what is reported is violent and revolves around firearms. Some

weeks it seems that almost every other Frenchman has been killing his wife/mistress/next-door neighbour, let alone the annual slaughter of turtles, which goes on at this time of year despite being outlawed by the EU, appears a detail beside the human carnage.

The two phenomena, though, are not entirely unconnected. The prevalence of hunting in rural France means that many people have a weapon to hand in an "emergency". It was a hunting rifle that a 16-year-old boy used to murder 15 people in the Var last summer. Earlier this month, one man used his

to kill his neighbour after a decades-long feud over a shared access road: the deeds said it could be used only for horses and ploughs; the victim had taken his tractor down it.

But the saddest case is perhaps that of 68-year-old Pierre Brunet, the mayor of a village called Saint-Aoustrille in western France, and the truth of what happened will probably never be known.

Brunet was out on a duck-shoot one winter Sunday with his wife and friends, in the course of which he shot his wife dead. Within the week, he found himself in custody, accused of his wife's murder.

He protested his innocence, insisting that it was a terrible accident: the dog had distracted his attention, the gun had gone off, and his wife had fallen into the firing line. You can almost hear the cynical grandiose response: "They all say that - put him inside!"

With local newspaper reports making veiled references to long-standing village gossip about the mayor and his wife, Brunet stayed in custody. Last month, it was reported that he had died in his cell "by his own hand", still protesting the injustice of his fate.

Mary Dejevsky

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the leader page

We must grasp the nettle of university reform

Hundreds of thousands of children will be condemned to second-class degrees – in more ways than one. So say the alarmists who fear a new split in the higher education system. Only years after the old division between polytechnics and universities was finally abolished, academics are now worried about a new hierarchy in higher education: an Ivy League of the top British universities, followed by everyone else.

The worries have been provoked by a plan thought up by the Higher Education Funding Council for England which would link the funding of expansion in universities to their results. This implies university league tables. But when dealing with something as subtle and complicated as higher education, how is a fair and reasonable grading system to be created?

The traditional universities would not worry or flinch. Badly starved of cash, they complain that funding teaching by the number of bums on seats in the lecture hall – factory education – has compromised their standards. Some even contemplate top-up fees for students to raise the money they claim they need.

All in all, it isn't hard to imagine the creation of a new clique of universities drawing in more cash (whether from the HEFCE or from the students themselves) with which to teach Britain's academic elite. Meanwhile – so the

argument goes – undergraduates at other universities would have less money spent on them, and receive a lower standard of education as a result.

In fact, however, the HEFCE's proposals are sensible, and rather innocuous. It is ludicrous and Luddite to object to the formation of league tables for universities, so long as the grounds for judging them are fair and open. The more information available to prospective students and to employers the better.

Linking the funding of new places to results makes sense too. As higher education has expanded, more of taxpayers' money has poured into the institutions that managed to push numbers up fastest, without regard to the quality of the education provided. All higher education institutions should welcome a new approach whereby quality as well as quantity are taken into account.

So far so good. However, certain controversial questions follow from the HEFCE's new plans. And the first one is the problem of measurement. For government to discriminate between courses and institutions fairly, it needs a clear and well-understood idea about what kinds of education it wants to provide for the next generation. Even more sticky is the question about how far these links between quality and funding should go – and whether Oxford and Cambridge can indeed demand ever more cash on the basis of their results. These are daunting problems indeed – and they fall



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at the feet of Sir Ron Dearing, head of the Government's commission into the future of higher education.

Deciding the first question – what kind and what quality of education we want – will be a difficult task. Governments are rarely able to judge the sorts of skills that the labour market will need 10 years down the road. Often they get it wrong. But they cannot duck it, either. Teenagers are unlikely to be much better equipped to decide.

Whatever Sir Ron does, however, he must not bow to conservative traditionalists. Minimum standards are vital. But a rich national curriculum for the con-

tent of degrees would be a mistake, limiting the diversity and specialisation that should take place in post-18 education. He should bear in mind too that the skills employers tend to value most highly among graduates are not developed in the factory-style education which is cheapest to provide and expand. Enabling students to practise communication and presentation skills means giving them close attention in tutorials and seminars. That's expensive. Shorter, but more intensive, teaching courses may be one option to defray the extra costs.

Furthermore, Sir Ron's remit should not simply include rarefied academic

education. High-level, high-quality vocational and professional education for the over-18s is essential (on – and is in far greater need of attention and development than the academic sphere. Sir Ron could start by making sure courses in these areas are properly validated and funded.

But it is the second question – determining the relationship between funding and quality, and deciding who pays – that will prove most controversial. Although in the past the state provided extra cash for academic education, and in particular for Oxford and Cambridge, both Government and Labour are moving towards greater equity in funding.

Oxford, Cambridge, LSE et al argue on the other hand that they need the extra money – either from the taxpayer or the student – to subsidise and protect their excellence. Harvard, Stanford and the other Ivy League universities in the US all charge considerably higher fees than, for example, Michigan University. And students are prepared to pay them.

It would be wrong for British universities to get extra cash from the taxpayer just because they had a more academic intake. To justify the extra money, they would need to prove that they added extra value to those already talented students. And given that those privileged students will benefit most from the education, there is some case for asking them to pay more back to

their university (through for example a graduate tax) in order to pay for it.

These latest ideas are only the beginning of the tougher and more widespread reform of universities Britain now needs. It should cover all options – how long the courses are, who is entitled to attend and who pays what. Radical change is essential. Given the complexity of the debate it is depressing but perhaps not surprising that the Government postponed Sir Ron Dearing's report until after the election. Confused and worried, the universities will have to stagger on until then.

Teenage trials

So you discover that today teenagers will set you back over £60,000. Don't worry – here is our guide to cheap adolescent living.

Parents should encourage semaphore and carrier pigeons as a more efficient form of contact than telephones. New Age booklets should be left around the home; this may encourage teenagers to decamp to a treehouse alongside a roads protest. Brutal descriptions of atrocities may also be useful: meat can be very expensive.

And there is one comfort. However long they live with you they will never spend more than 10p worth of cleaning fluid on that room.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unfair trade war against the UK

Sir: Much of the confusion about the Government's stance on acceptance of British bovine materials appears to stem from a belief that it is just about beef, ie meat. In fact, the blanket ban by the EU was a hastily-enacted political move that has backfired as far as confidence in beef is concerned (leading article: "Major's EU work-role puts us all in peril", 22 May).

The real point at stake is that the ban is on beef and bovine derivatives. The immediate effect of this was that the export sales of an UK-origin edible meat and dairy products, edible, medical and cosmetic gelatine and collagen-containing materials, edible and industrial chemicals derived from milk and fat such as stearates, lactic acid and others, and semen and ova – all materials never shown to be capable of transmitting the scrapie or BSE agents – were absolutely and totally banned.

It is ridiculous that medical, chemical and cosmetic exports have been caught up in the same net as beef meat. The overall effect amounts to an unfair and perhaps illegal trade war against the UK.

This is not the first time that the EU has imposed bans on products in a way that displays a breathtaking ignorance of practicalities and a total failure to put risks into context. It is important to show the Commission and Council of Ministers that knee-jerk reactions have effects far beyond their apparent intent, and that these effects cannot and should not be tolerated.

MEREDITH LLOYD EVANS
Principal Consultant
BioBridge UK
Cambridge

Sir: It is a great shame that after over 23 years of "awkward" – at times (compensatory) – relations with the EU, the British government should not have learnt its lesson. John Major's "declaration of war" on the other EU countries shows that far from wanting to put Britain "at the heart of Europe", the Prime Minister is just as intent on isolating Britain as his predecessor was.

Already his actions have been compared to Margaret Thatcher's Falklands war.

However, if the party was to look beyond its own political interests for one moment, it would see that on a long-term basis, the present action is likely to do irreparable damage to our relationship with the European Union, and threaten our future prospects within it.

ROSALIND GILL
Radlett,
Hertfordshire

Sir: As Britain has been exporting hundreds of tons of meat and bone-meat for years, with presumably some of it going to other European cattle food manufacturers, it would seem likely that the current epidemic of BSE is not just a British, but indeed a European problem.

One is led to conclude that disease management on the Continent has been more efficient than in the UK and that the rest of Europe is taking advantage of our predicament.

DAVID MARSH
London, W14



Changes in nursing care

Sir: Nick Timmins' analysis of the latest think tank report on nursing ("Cleaners become carers in brave new world", 23 May) will have alarmed both nurses and their patients alike.

The revolution for the NHS workforce he refers to is nothing new to nurses. Nurses more than any other professional group have adapted successfully to the roller coaster of change which is the modern health service.

Far from being a hidebound institution as the report intimates, nursing has been taking on more and more responsibilities from junior doctors, is sharing multi-disciplinary education and training with doctors and therapists, and is in close partnership with GPs as primary care takes on increasing responsibilities from hospitals.

Nurses are very pragmatic about change: if it looks like it will benefit patients they will support it. If it is filled with inconsistencies and would damage the quality of care they give to patients they will oppose it.

CHRISTINE HANCOCK
General Secretary
Royal College of Nursing
London, W1

Sir: As an NHS physiotherapist I was angered to learn that "generic carers" could replace most of my profession within the next decade.

Physiotherapy training involves an intensive four year degree course which provides physiotherapists with the knowledge to assess and treat patients effectively. The

Poverty caused by means-testing

Sir: Whether or not Michael Meacher really supports the scrapping of the Jobseekers Allowance, the facts about this benefit are not in dispute ("Labour plays down gaffe by Meacher", 20 May).

The Jobseekers Allowance will result in a steep increase in means-testing due to the reduction in the contributory benefit period from 12 to six months. Soon many people will have no incentive to continue in paid employment if their spouse has been out of work for just six months – every pound in earnings will see a reduction in

The Bible is not a moral manual

Sir: Lord Runcie's understanding of the Bible – if accurately presented by Andrew Brown's article ("And the Word of God is: ambiguous", 17 May) – seems perfectly correct. The Bible is not a moral manual. It is a collection of religious books. Anyone looking for a secular moral code in the Bible will not find it.

Contrary to your headline, the Bible is not at all ambiguous on this issue. A secular Bible is a contradiction in terms.

Secular morality, on the other hand, is a well known and much debated area of human experience that owes little or nothing to religious codes of behaviour. Grossly oversimplified, for an

action to be correctly described as a moral action it (logically) must: 1) be rationally based, 2) be freely and autonomously chosen, 3) treat other people as "ends" and not "means", and 4) be applicable to all. Following a set of religious commandments is, clearly, not one of the necessary criteria for being moral. One does not have to be religious in order to be moral.

One simple but significant implication of this distinction is that state school inspectors must be vociferously, and if necessary, legally, attacked whenever they criticise an RE teacher for not including moral education in their lessons on religion.

JOHN SEALEY
Morton, Lincolnshire

Sir: It is a sad reflection of the decadent state of the Church of England when a former Archbishop of Canterbury publicly states that he knowingly ordained practising homosexuals (report, 16 May).

Why, as the church's chief minister, did he not uphold the church's canon law? Canon C 4.1 states: "Every bishop shall take care that he admit no person into holy orders but such as he knows either by himself, or by sufficient testimony ... to be of good repute and such as (to be a wholesome example and pattern to the flock of Christ."

Is it any wonder that the established church of the nation is reputed to be losing 300 members a week when its most senior leaders are so prevaricating.

The Rev NIGEL SCOTLAND
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

The cost of sponsorship

Sir: Your leader on the Millennium festival (17 May) talked of the failure of our business and political leaders to work together in the name of communal purpose.

As the national association promoting the alliance between business, society and the arts, we believe in public and private sectors as partners in the common good. But the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA) has consistently argued that the private sector is being expected to play too large a role in the partnership funding requirements set down by the various National Lottery distribution bodies.

ABSA saw sponsorship rise in 1994-95 by 19 per cent to £18m; the Exhibition requires at least half of that again from the private sector. The danger is that, if business is interested, it will not increase total budgets, but transfer funds from one worthy project to another, creating a shortfall somewhere else.

We should be calling for a Royal Commission to examine where we go from here. Unless we take a step back and debate the issues we need to address, we shall be forever doomed to focus on the narrow question as to who pays the bill, or to put it more crudely, we will know the cost of everything, but the value of nothing.

COLIN TWEEDY
Director General
Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts
London SE1

Explosive growth of world's cities

Sir: I should like to add a rider to Geoffrey Lean's timely article on the UN "city summit" in Istanbul ("What future for our cities?", 22 May). Possibly the most threatening aspect of the explosive growth of cities is the demand this will make on energy resources.

The 1993 World Energy Council report *Energy for Tomorrow's World* predicted that in 25 years the demand for energy will have increased by 88 per cent over the 1990 level. Most of this increase will be the result of the spread of cities throughout the developing world. Soon after the turn of the century 300 million people will inhabit 21 megacities of over 100 million inhabitants and heading the list will be Hong Kong with 40 million. At the same time China is developing the world's largest linear city along 70 miles of the Pearl River. Much of the energy consumed by these cities will come from fossil fuels with their high carbon content.

Remembering that the UN Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change Scientific Committee states that, to be reasonably sure of halting global warming, we should cut back on carbon emissions by 60 per cent as against 1990 levels, then the energy demand created by this growth in urbanisation is by far the greatest threat facing the long-term stability of the planet.

Professor PETER F SMITH
Director
Sustainable Building Network
University of Sheffield

Value of arguing

Sir: The discussion between Polly Toynbee and Melanie Phillips (Debate, 24 May) pivots on the unhappiness that exists in marriage and whether one should suffer it or have the freedom to escape it through divorce.

In the course of six letters neither Ms Toynbee nor Ms Phillips advance the concept of unhappiness as being a necessary and enriching part of marriage, as it is in any personal or social development. Should the birth of a new life be without pain? Should the summer never have a winter?

The anguish caused by the traditionalists is their avoidance and refusal to accept conflict. Ms Toynbee and Ms Phillips seem to assume that conflict is a point of divergence in a relationship, rather than the point of convergence of two free individuals. If the goal of marriage is happiness and happiness is assumed to be devoured by marital arguments then marriage has no future, or at best no true worth.

CHRIS LIGHTFOOT
Oslo, Norway

Too much talk

Sir: Surely what is wrong with Radio 3 and its music policy (Letters, 23 May) is that nowadays we rarely hear music being played. What we get, in the main, is people talking about music.

Before the present regime took over, if you switched on Radio 3 at any hour of the day or night, the chances were that music would be playing or an interesting play was being performed. Now it's almost always people discussing music – boringly and interminably.

PETER CROOKSTON
London, W11

essay

England's gentle revolutionaries

The landgrabbers of Wandsworth know they will be defeated eventually in their plan to keep the land for the people but their vision may carry us into the next century, muses Paul Valley

At the front of Room 607 in the Royal Courts of Justice sat Deputy Master Burton surrounded by call-bound legal volumes and lawyers in their quotidian pin-stripes. He was there to rule on an application by Guinness for an eviction order, to clear the derelict land where a distillery stood 21 years ago, but which now is a flattened concrete expanse sprouting with knot-grass and wild buddleia shrubs. At the back of his court sat representatives of the motley parliament who have occupied it under the banner of an organisation that calls itself The Land is Ours. They were familiar from newspaper photographs of Newbury bypass protests or New Age travellers' solstice gatherings on Salisbury Plain: their uniforms were home-knit, rainbow-coloured, matted, doubled-dreaded and unkempt.

The Deputy Master ruled for Guinness, but the rest of his remarks were drowned by mutters of "shame" and ironic

have told how the sponging squatters, with their malodorous manners and messy New Age metaphysics, have moved onto the 13-acre site that has stood desolate since it was bulldozed seven years ago. The owners, Guinness, now want to sell it to Safeway for a supermarket, petrol station and massive car park with luxury riverside apartments. The landgrabbers want low-cost housing for locals, a public park and an exemplar eco-village to show how sustainable technology can work in inner-city life.

There is more to it than that. The confrontation over the riverside plot says something about the conflict between people and profit that is at the heart of so much contemporary decision-making. But the resonances go deeper. Wandsworth is not the first land occupation by this group, which has described itself as the "New Levellers" and claims as forbears the radical Puritan movements - The Levellers and The Diggers - that burgeoned after the English Civil War. In a post-Christian age, where ecology has become the nearest thing we have to a shared religion, the Eco-Puritans of Wandsworth are not so far removed from the Christian Puritans of the 17th century as might be imagined.

The new occupants of Gargyle Wharf are a mixed bunch with a mixed agenda, a ragtag crew of drop-outs, druggies, aesthetic idealists, anarchist activists and political reformers. One day last week in the large marquee of canvas and plastic erected as a central meeting venue, a group of spaced-out characters sat by a totem pole with massive candlesticks surrounded by colour postcards of Hindu gods. Focusing hard on their roll-ups or on formulating sentences or beating out desultory tattoos on African drums, their chief purpose seemed to be to provide colour for any passing tabloid-minded reporter.

But elsewhere there is a seriousness of purpose. Outside other members of the 40-strong occupation were cultivating vegetable and herb beds made up of site debris covered in the four tons of top soil and compost they have brought onto the site. Others were working on the construction of new compost loos after the surprised local health authority inspector pronounced their prototype sanitary and safe but insufficient to the deluge of visitors (they had 2,500 in one day recently). Yet others were effecting alterations to their



It is easy to deride the squatters with their hippy huts, but they have a seriousness of purpose

Peter Macdonald

laughter from those he had described as "this band of reformers". The junior judge arched his eyes in mock bewilderment. "Cheerio," one bobble-hatted protester said jauntily to the judge as he left. At the back a woman wearing a crocheted pastel beret began to pick at a guitar which was painted all over with Romany designs. "Now before we go out, remember, big smiles for the press - this is not a defeat," said the only besuited campaigner, George Monbiot, as he led the group out of the court to be greeted by the English establishment's most effective anti-protest weapon, a steady shower of rain.

It would be easy to deride. A number of newspapers have done exactly that in the three weeks since the group began its occupation of the land at Gargyle Wharf in Wandsworth, south London. Lurid reports

"low-impact", eco-exemplar dwellings to stop the increasingly heavy rain from getting through.

In one, Bill Knight, a pony-tailed, 34-year-old civil engineer - for Henry Boot, Ove Arup and various other constructors until he went green - was inspecting the Safeway plans inside a building of sprung birch poles covered with

recycled transparent plastic. It was modelled on the construction principles of a Mongolian yurt, he explained, launching into an impressive spiel about stress factors and load bearing.

"Look at this square 11-storey tower," he said jabbing his finger at the plan. "It's supposed to be an attractive riverside landmark feature. I could draw something more attractive, functional and cheaper in a couple of minutes." The plan, and two previous attempts, had been rejected by local planners. There was a Sainsbury, an Asda and a Tesco nearby, and the plans conflicted with government policy guidelines on shopping and with the local council policy on rejuvenating Wandsworth town centre.

The Levellers, after whom the modern squatters take their name, were a radical group of supporters of the Parliamentary cause during the Civil War. Their goals were the transfer of

sovereignty to the House of Commons, an extension of suffrage to the "middle and poorer sort of people", equality before the law, security of land tenure, an end to conscription and tithes, and complete freedom of religious worship. "They came close to influencing the settlement of the kingdom after the Civil War," says Keith Wrightson of Jesus College, Cambridge. Their even more radical fellows, the Diggers, were agrarian communists who occupied land in Surrey for more than a year, demanding that common land should be given over to the poor to cultivate.

Today in an urbanised industrial society, land has lost the import it had in an agricultural age. "Land in the 17th century was employment. Therefore the only thing that lower-class people wanted was land. It was the crucial issue," says the celebrated Civil War historian, Christopher Hill. "Today unem-

ployment is the crucial issue. The ordinary people do not want to go back to the land. They want jobs. If there was a modern equivalent of The Levellers, it would probably be concerned around unemployment."

In Wandsworth they disagree. Without a doubt the most impressive of the campaigners there is George Monbiot, an Oxford academic (he is a Fellow of Green College) and an international environmental campaigner (he will miss tomorrow's meeting between the protesters and Guinness because he has a prior commitment in Brazil). Monbiot, 33, is the man with the suit, the cultured accent and a computer database full of media contacts.

So why has such a tuned-in character lighted on such an unfashionable cause as land? "Five per cent of the urban land of Britain is derelict. London alone has an area of vacant land

the size of the borough of Westminster. Environmental issues, development issues and housing issues are one and the same," he told a London University conference on "Urban Regeneration and the Stakeholder Society" to which he dashed after giving television interviews outside the Royal Courts of Justice. "The problems are all linked. Building supermarkets closes down small shops in the area, wiping out large numbers of jobs (supermarkets usually producing a net loss in numbers of jobs in an area). That drives house builders out onto the edge of the countryside. That encourages people to use cars more. The economic viability of city centre deteriorates and becomes increasingly hostile to human life. We need a moratorium on supermarkets."

That is not all he wants. Like the original Levellers he is after some very specific reforms. He wants changes in three areas of the existing planning system. At present if a local council says no to a development proposal, the developer can keep resubmitting new variations on the application every couple of years to wear the local authority down. Then through something called "offsite planning gain" a developer can legally offer a local council a large sum - between £500,000 and £40m have been reported in various cases - to sweeten an otherwise unpalatable proposal (in different circumstances this practice would be called bribery). Finally, if a local authority continues to refuse, the developer can appeal (as have Guinness and Safeway) through a public inquiry to the Secretary of State for the Environment to gain approval; yet the public cannot make the same appeal if their local planners say yes to something they oppose.

"We have to stop leaving these decisions to the town halls where so many opaque decisions are taken behind closed doors," Monbiot told the conference. "And we need the Government to pronounce that derelict inner-city land cannot be used for such development schemes. Then the value of the land would plummet from its present overvalued prices and could be bought for low-cost housing and community projects."

Monbiot's choice of the Levellers as lost ancestors seems apt to historians of the 17th century. "Now that the conventional Left is committed to a productionist doctrine - concerned with efficiency and the maximisation of living standards - ecology is the last refuge of anti-capitalism," says Dr David Starkey of the London School of Economics. "And, as it seems it has replaced Christianity as the religion of our age, so these people are the new Puritans." The original and the new Levellers "both have an intensely earnest commitment to notions of moral and social reformation," believes Keith Wrightson. "There are family resemblances - psychologically, in their radical programmes and in the fact that they probably haven't got a hope in hell of succeeding." The original Levellers

were quashed by Cromwell, who decided their agenda of religious tolerance and political radicalism was too subversive. Gerrard Winstanley's Diggers were thrown off their land occupation after a year.

Others, such as Tariq Ali, the great champion of protest and occupation in the events of 1968, see something more positive in Monbiot's combination of a wildly idealistic vision with a fine eye for the symbolic and a canny sense of what might be politically achievable in the short term. "The Sixties was about changing the world - small reforms were irrelevant. We failed," he now says, "but this movement is more focused. Some of the things they are doing they might succeed in. Amnesia is all too common in this soundbite culture. So it is good to see people looking back into history."

And though the groups to which the Wandsworth squatters now look back were quashed, their spirit lived on.

'Ecology is the last refuge of anti-capitalism. As it seems it has replaced Christianity as the religion of our age, so these people are the new Puritans'

The thinking of the Christian puritans - with its emphasis upon equality, individual freedom, extended suffrage, law reform, decentralising of decisions and power to the people - entered the bloodstream of radical English political thought. The elements of a more participatory political structure lived on in the dissenting churches - congregationalism, presbyterianism, the Quakers and the Baptists. The notion of the defence and extension of customary rights against authority became an important part of the inheritance of trade unionism. And the passionate commitment to the liberties of the free-born Englishman spawned a libertarian radicalism, which was why the British Left has always been more influenced by a Christian individualism than Marxist authoritarianism.

Privately the squatters accept that sooner or later Guinness will evict them. "But we will be there at the public inquiry which begins in Wandsworth Town Hall on June 4th," says Bill Knight. "These inquiries are usually heard in empty halls but we'll pack this one." And if that fails? "We will pop up somewhere else. This is an idea whose time has come. Perhaps, perhaps not. But elements of their vision may be what carries into the next century a tradition that British public policy would be the poorer without."

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We're at war, it doesn't matter with whom

My secret mole in Mr Major's Beef War Cabinet has been writing a journal of the first few days inside Major's War bunker. Luckily, he has been able to smuggle out this diary of the opening of the Beef War campaign of non-co-operation with Europe, and riveting reading it makes, too. What we have here, I think, is a war classic in the making

War Cabinet Diary
Day one: Never have I seen John Major like this before. Sometimes he is, dare I say it, a bit of a wimp, a bit of a Neville Chamberlain, but now he has been transformed into, if not a Churchill, at least a Mrs Thatcher, and if not a Mrs Thatcher, at least a General Galtier...

No, I don't think that's right. That is no way to start a war diary. Let me try again. Never have I seen John Major like this before. He stood before us and said, "My friends, so far and no further."

There was a long pause. Someone, I think it was Ken, said: "How do you mean, Prime Minister?"

"Exactly what I say, Kenneth," he said. "So far and no further. We are now at war."

There was a long silence. "May we ask with whom we are at war?" said Ken.

"In a sense," said the PM, "it does not matter. The fact that we are at war is what matters. Sometimes when the nation is at a low ebb we need a rallying cry, a focusing point. A war, Margaret Thatcher once said, is the only thing that can unite a nation. We are now in a state of non-cooperation with..."

Yes?

"Everyone."

Day two: John Major was simply magnificent today. He stood up in front of the blackboard with his pointer and gave us a lecture on the progress of the war. "Here is a picture of the war," he said, pointing at a grinning photograph of Tony Blair.

"Are we at war with Tony Blair?" we asked, startled. "We are always at war with the enemy," he replied.



Miles Kingston

"That is the man who wants to get his hands on this country and run it. We must not let him do it."

"We let you do it, PM," I said softly. He did not hear me but I think Ken did, for he smiled quietly to himself.

Day three: "We shall be striking THERE and THERE and THERE," said the PM, jabbing at the map of Europe with his pointer, roughly at Brussels, Strasbourg, and Bonn. "With immediate effect."

"Striking in what way, Prime Minister?" said Ken. "Surely you know what strike means, Ken?" said Major. "Withdraw labour. Non-cooperation. Blocking progress. We shall be sitting on all these committees and

refusing to allow work to proceed."

"It is just possible, PM," said Malcolm, "that Blair might claim you are stealing his weapons. Striking has always been a Labour speciality. Indeed, it has always been an Old Labour speciality. Would it look right if we invaded Europe using weapons which even the Labour Party had outlawed?"

For a moment I thought John Major would explode. He went red in the face and inflated himself up to an enormous stature.

Suddenly a cigar appeared in one hand and his other hand made a V-for-Victory.

"We shall non-co-operate with them in the streets!" he bellowed. "We shall non-co-operate with them in the houses! We shall non-co-operate with them on the beaches..."

Day four: "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre," muttered Ken in my ear, as the PM took us through his war strategy once more. It did not escape my eagle ears.

You may think I don't speak German, Ken," said the PM, leaning forward on one

arm in that totally exasperating way he has during PM's Question Time. "And you may be right. But do you think it is patriotic to be speaking European lingo during a war?"

"Why not, *mutatis mutandis*?" said Ken, somewhat disloyally, I thought. The PM attempted to identify the language for a moment and then gave up.

"So what lessons do we draw from my analysis of the situation?" he went on.

"That we should have fired Stephen Dorrell before he made the speech that got us into this ghastly mess," said Michael Heseltine. "That we should have fired Douglas Hogg before he got us further into it. And that we should have picked me instead of you after Thatcher was ditched."

"The lesson we draw," said Major, apparently not hearing any of this, "is that when your backs are to the wall you do nothing. You withdraw co-operation. Future generations will look back and say 'never was so much owed by so many to so few for doing so little'."

I sometimes have terrible doubts about the outcome of this war.

the commentators

Our oldest hospital may finally be taken off the critical list by its friends in the City – to start a new life as a charity

Is Bart's saved?

When Virginia Bottomley, then Secretary of State for Health, announced in 1992 that St Bartholomew's Hospital in London was likely to close by the year 2000, I immediately wondered whether it would really happen. Of course a cabinet minister has immense power and is bound to have the backing of the Treasury when seeking to save money. And I well understood, too, the argument that inner London had accumulated too many hospitals.

My doubts were based upon observing the behaviour of institutions. Institutions have life. I found it difficult to believe that Bart's would simply roll over and die – by ministerial fiat. For the outstanding feature of the Royal Hospital of St Bartholomew is its immense age. It was founded in 1123 as a hostel or hospital alongside the Priory of St Bartholomew in Smithfield, where it still stands today. It is likely that some of those first admitted were born before the Norman Conquest. Bart's is pre-Magna Carta. It is more than 100 years older than Parliament. No Oxbridge college rivals it for antiquity. The Inns of Court appeared 200 years or so later. Only the monarchy and the Church of England are older. This still vigorous, well-equipped hospital has survived many turbulent periods to its English history and threats to its existence. Could it really pass away now in just another reorganisation of the health service?

If Bart's is saved, as now seems probable, its historic strengths will have played an important role. In the first place, Bart's was created specifically to minister to the sick poor. As well as hospital it was hospice and almshouse. It cared for orphans and foundlings and babies from nearby Newgate Prison. It maintained a night shelter for pilgrims and wandering people. When Henry VIII granted its new letters patent in 1546, it was "hereafter to be called the House of the Poor in West Smithfield in the suburbs of the City of London, of Henry VIII's foundation". Remarkably, this social mission has survived intact to the present day.



ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH

Perhaps uniquely, Bart's has neither private wing nor private beds. This is, I believe, why the Save Bart's campaign has been so popular. Appearing quickly after Mrs Bottomley's announcement, the organisation, run from outside the hospital by former patients, gathered 500,000 signatures to a petition within six weeks and then pushed the total to 1 million. The petitions came from every part of the country and from all over the world. While it is unlikely

enormity do know their history. To this day, on ceremonial occasions they wear gowns trimmed with fur; they pass round loving-cups at their feasts and give toasts in quaint wording – to the so and so Company "with its Maids, Wives and Widows", coupled with the name of the Master. The historic Bart's is part of their world. Indeed, the current Lord Mayor is a consultant surgeon at the hospital. Thus on a very cold January day earlier this year, 800 City supporters marched from Guildhall to Downing Street, some in their gowns of office, to deliver a petition for the preservation of the hospital. More to the point, the City has money. The City government is rich; the institutions comprising the financial markets are some of the wealthiest in the world. This is crucial. A plausible plan for securing the independent existence of Bart's can be financed.

I'd like Bart's to remain closer to its origins and provide, too, a shelter for the homeless

that more than a handful of the signatories, former patients, visitors, staff and supporters, actually knew the hospital's history, they had somehow absorbed its ethos.

Bart's second historic strength, so far as saving itself from oblivion is concerned, is utterly different from the first. This hospital with a mission to the poor is part of the fabric of the richest square mile in the country, the City of London. The letters patent of 1546 was in effect part of a re-financing following the closure of St Bartholomew's Priory, in turn a result of the dissolution of the monasteries. The king insisted that the City share the cost and assume responsibility for the hospital's administration and maintenance. While Bart's increasingly asserted its independence in the centuries that followed, it remained within the ambit of the City fathers until 1948, when it became part of the National Health Service.

Now the common councillors, aldermen, members of livery companies, masters of this and that who comprise the City of London's gov-

Where Bart's differs from other historical institutions, faced as they often are with defending themselves, is that it took no steps to prepare for an adverse diagnosis. The threat had been in evidence for some time. But whereas the Oxbridge colleges always keep half an eye on political risks, Bart's did nothing. The City Corporation has recently scored a great political triumph by persuading the Labour Party that the Lord Mayor, with all his pomp and circumstance, should be maintained even when London has a new elected authority. Nothing similar has been attempted by Bart's itself. Partly this is because the hospital ceased to manage its own affairs when its own board of governors was abolished in 1974. Doctors, too, are unpolitical to a fault. And unbusinesslike, judging by last week's report by the Audit Commission into doctors as purchasers of health services.

Nonetheless it now looks as if Bart's can be saved. A new charity, The Royal Hospital of St Bart-

holomew Charitable Foundation, is being formed. Its board, or "governors" as the trustees will be called, will comprise City figures with fundraising ability. It already has sufficient finance to commission management consultants to prepare a business plan. This will describe how new services are to be built up and a new graduate medical school established as certain existing operations are transferred to the Royal London Hospital. Given the ever-growing shortage of hospital beds, there can be few fears of a failure of demand for the new facilities.

But the big idea is that the working capital, in effect the flywheel of the undertaking, should be supplied by charitable donations. City institutions would be prominent among those asked to subscribe in this manner rather than by the usual means of an investment in shares. The notion is that the new Bart's would pioneer a model for financing and delivering medical care complementary to the health service. While its patients would have their bills paid by the NHS or by their companies or by insurance schemes or out of their own pockets, the spirit is intended to be neither that of the cost-cutting NHS trust hospital nor of a profit-maximising, American-style operation.

My only regret, in looking through the proposals, is that the creation of a private wing is suggested – with the result that one of the key traditions of the hospital would disappear. Indeed, I would like to see Bart's remain even closer to its origins and provide, alongside its super-sophisticated facilities and graduate school, a shelter for the homeless, as in medieval times.

There is just one snag. The Secretary of State for Health, Stephen Dorrell, must be persuaded to pass, or sell, ownership of the hospital and its site to the new trust. To agree would be at once popular and daring, a prospect not often given to a Tory politician these days. And so, after 400 years as a church institution, 400 years under civil tutelage and 50 years under state control, Bart's would find a new status – one appropriate, it is hoped, to the 21st century.



New Age may be mainstream, but it's a mistake

A woman was holding a small glass crystal up to the light, dangling it so a silver thread, "It is to help me sell my house," she explained. "He told me to take it up to the top left-hand corner of the house – that's where the moony aura is – and swing it about by the window. It'll be sold in no time."

This is the ideal home exhibition of the interior world – the Mind Body Spirit Festival, now filling London's Royal Horticultural Halls. Here the New Age lays out its myriad stalls each year – and each year there are more of them. Hocus and snake oil is a booming multi-million pound industry. Many of its products routinely find their way onto the counters of Boots, and the New Age and therapy sections in book shops crowd the shelves. Up to 50,000 people flock to this festival, and with an £8 entrance fee and an average £15 per personal consultation, this is serious money.

There are, to be sure, a few aged hippies with thinning pony tails, frayed Indian waistcoats and nose flutes slung round their necks. But what strikes me most forcefully is the ordinariness of most of the visitors, eagerly buying into inner har-

monising, Tarot – the doorway to the subconscious, UFOs, shamans, psychics and inner alchemy. Middle-aged, Marks and Spencers-dressed, cornal-looking people with ordinary jobs fill the hall, on both sides of the counter. This is not "alternative" any longer; this is mainstream. These are not the anti-establishment Yuppies of yesterday, they are accountants from Croydon and bathroom salesmen from Basildon. You might find the same sort of people at a Methodist conference or a bowls tournament – respectable, home-owning, salary-earning solid citizens who think a bit of soul physics, an Indian head massage, a spot of freeze-dried algae or a session in the gongmasters workshop might do them some good.

Gaston, an elegantly dressed Frenchman in his late sixties, opted for inversion therapy. Once all the moony and keys were removed from his pocket, therapist Paul lay on his back and beat Gaston backwards over his upraised feet and kept him upside down, balanced for 10 minutes. Meanwhile changes to the colour of Gaston's aura



POLLY TOYNEBEE

were monitored on a Toshiba laptop to which his wrist was attached. Onlookers might have been more worried about changes to the colour of his face.

The National Federation of Spiritual Healers (a registered charity, but what isn't?) had a flotilla of practitioners laying hands upon eager clients – eyes closed, intense concentration. "Anything from the trivial to the terminal," one woman healer said. "The power will just come in on it wherever it is, with just a tad of a tingling, that's all." Ooe healer, Steve Sharpe, explained how he was called. "I was picked out of the congregation and told I was a psychic. Not me, mate, I said. I'm a down-to-earth London cabbie." He still drives his cab by day, but beats by night. "I had one guy, had a tumour on the

Science is our triumph over nature, and we should not be seduced by hokum such as the Mind Body Spirit Festival

lung. His doctor couldn't believe the improvement I'd made." Where is he now? "Oh, well he passed on. But I tell you, we're talking bones mending and the like."

Behind the counter of the Aetherius Society is a small, balding computer technician in ordinary life, but in contact with the Gods from Space the rest of the time. The Cosmic Masters of the universe with their flying saucers will come and rescue us all in the Aquarian age. Indeed the coming millennium features frequently here. We are living in The Last Years.

Elsewhere a large chart of the feet explains reflexology. This is a treatment, like aromatherapy, that has become so common that quite apparently sensible people swear by it. The chart explained that mas-

saging just under the big toe connects up with the medulla oblongata; the right eye is to be located under the third toe; the right testicle in the centre of the heel, just a bit down from the rectum. I was once dragged off to a French reflexologist by a credulous friend, but it tickled and I giggled which made him angry. "You have oo sole!" I thought he said.

The cults are not like conventional religion because they have no social dimension. They are entirely self-centred, without a communal aim. They connect to no general conception of "the good", apart from the incidental consequences of being at peace with self. Workshops have oases such as "Understanding and Befriending Myself" and "If All the World's a Stage, Why Can't I Have a Better Part?"

At one stand I heard a counsellor advising a 13-year-old girl. She had just spent £10 having her aura photographed and the polaroid snap showed a big blob of green above her head. "Ah, green," said the counsellor. "It means you are always trying to please other people, and not asking for what you need. Am I right?" Of course the girl nodded in vehement agreement.

This is a world where everyone is sick. We are stressed out, full of toxins, our minds clogged with memories of past lives, psychically blocked, out of touch with nature and our true selves. East is good (forget tiger economies, think Reiki and Feng Shui) and West is bad (except for Native Americans' holistic synergy with nature). Science and reason are destroying the environment and our psyches, dragging us further from our mystic roots. New Age is sentimental, ersatz stuff. It is sugary sweet and cosy. "Nature" to the cultists is an advertising slogan "full of natural goodness". This is feel-goodery without grit or honesty. Death is just an out-of-the-body virtual reality. This is nature seen through the picture

window of a centrally-heated, all mod cons home, with the GP reassuringly down the road.

But does it matter? Is there any harm in it? Why shouldn't people clutch whatever they can to see them through? What is wrong with illusion and fantasy as a survival strategy? The answer is tough and unbecoming – superstition diminishes us. Nature is the enemy, red in tooth and claw. It killed most babies, gave us smallpox, famine, plague and a life of unremitting

toil followed by early death. Science is our triumph over nature. Truth – demonstrable, provable – matters.

Tolerance for this brain-rotting stuff is fashionable, but we should be harsher rationalists. Humanity is humiliated when people are drunk on delusions. What hope for progress if we shoo away reason in droves to seek out sentimental escapism? It is distressing to watch grown-up people foolishly seduced by fairy tales.

Whoever wins, Israel's peace is still far away

Patrick Cockburn looks at the impact of this week's elections

Does play a big role in the Israeli election. They flutter about symbolising peace in TV commercials and on billboards. Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, and Benjamin Netanyahu, his right-wing rival, both promise peace with security. At times their rhetoric is interchangeable. It is also deceptive. Both sides are sure of their core supporters, to each case about a third of electorate. Supporters of the Oslo accords between Israel and the Palestinians will never vote for Mr Netanyahu and his opponents will never vote for Mr Peres.

Both candidates can afford to dilute their message in pursuit of votes in the centre. Hence the fuzziness of the messages they send. Mr Netanyahu says he will not tear up Oslo, though he is prepared to send the Israeli troops into the autonomous Palestinian enclaves in Gaza and the West Bank. Mr Peres promised an influential settler rabbi that no Israeli settlement will be moved.

Neither candidate is widely liked. Mr Peres was called "an inveterate schemer" by Yitzhak Rabin, the late prime minister. Mr Netanyahu is widely detested by many Israelis as a hypocrite for promising peace without territorial concessions to the Pal-

ber him whipping up crowds at anti-government rallies in the months before Mr Rabin was shot last year.

The television commercials reflect how the media advisers in both campaigns try to redress their candidate's weaknesses. Shimon Peres, 72, who has failed to win at the polls four times, is shown being mobbed at a rally by enthusiastic and obdurate young girls (in reality nobody gets that close to the Israeli Prime Minister since Mr Rabin was shot at point-blank range).

On his third marriage and having publicly confessed to adultery on television Mr Netanyahu, who is only 46, wants nothing in his commercials that will remind viewers of women or youth. Instead, he sits behind a large desk, in what appears to be a mock-up of the Oval Office, as he tries to persuade voters that Mr Peres plans to divide Jerusalem.

Polls show that two days from the election Mr Peres is proving marginally more persuasive. He has certainly convinced the US and most foreign governments that if he is re-elected the future of "the peace process" will be secured. But it may be that many Israelis and Arab leaders

election. This year, for the first time, the prime minister will be directly elected and the 120 members of the Knesset will be chosen separately. The aim of the reform was to weaken the bargaining strength of small religious parties in Israeli politics and to increase the power of the prime minister. Liberal Israelis lamented the new

Since he became Prime Minister, Peres has shown a fondness for half measures

authoritarianism but their grief may have been premature. The real balance of power between prime minister and Knesset is changing less than forecast.

In 1992, Mr Rabin and Labour defeated Yitzhak Shamir and Likud on a platform of making peace with the Palestinians. Labour, its left-wing ally Meretz and the Arab parties could muster 61 seats, enabling them

to form a coalition government. It was this de facto coalition that was the political basis for the Oslo agreement in 1993. If Likud and its allies had won the 1992 election, there would have been no land-for-peace accords.

It is this majority in the Knesset for peace with the Palestinians that is about to disappear. Opinion polls have for weeks shown Mr Peres marginally ahead in the race for the prime minister's office. But they have also shown Labour and Meretz both losing seats. Even if Mr Peres wins, he will have to shift his government to the right.

That shift is important because Palestinians are getting very little out of the Oslo accords. Gaza and the West Bank have been wholly sealed off for the election period. Businesses are impoverished and the day labourers who used to work in Israel are unemployed. Support for Oslo among Palestinians has been sustained by expectations that things will get better when the final status talks on Jerusalem, settlements, refugees and frontiers resume this year. If they get nothing, Mr Arafat will be seen to have failed.

There are already signs of disillusionment. Last month the Islamic movement, Hamas, won the student

election for the first time at the West Bank university Bir Zeit, which has always had an influential political role. Israelis tend to misunderstand the Palestinian attitude to Oslo. They believe Palestinians will regard it as successful if it marginally improves their lot. Palestinians, on the contrary, originally welcomed Oslo as a stepping stone on the road to statehood. If they do not achieve it, they will reject the whole process.

If Mr Netanyahu is elected, Oslo will be rapidly strangled by quasi-legal restrictions. General Ariel Sharon, one of his chief lieutenants, has spelt out Likud's definition of autonomy, which differs little from occupation. But if Mr Peres is prime minister in a week's time, the outlook for a final resolution of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians may still not be good.

As foreign minister, Mr Peres was the architect of Oslo. His ability to manoeuvre complemented Mr Rabin's ability to take decisions. Since he became Prime Minister, Mr Peres has shown a fondness for half measures. He failed to call an immediate election, which he would have won, but then decided to bring it forward anyway. He may win the re-election on Wednesday but it may be doubted if he will be able to turn that victory into permanent peace.

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obituaries / gazette

Hideji Hojo

In the world of Japan's popular commercial theatre, he was known as "the Emperor". Only one other person, apart from the Emperor himself, has been accorded that influential title – the great film director Akira Kurosawa.

Both of these strong personalities were uncompromising in their literary, theatrical and cinematic demands upon others, and upon themselves. Hideji Hojo was particularly intolerant of interference, either by actors or by managements, in his own unique vision of the manner in which his hugely successful plays and musical entertainments should be staged. So he was also, albeit affectionately nicknamed "Obsessive Old Hideji".

He who was to become the author of over 200 plays started writing in his early teens, at junior high school. An ardent fan of the all-girl Takarazuka Revue troupe and of their brilliantly staged, spectacular musical melodramas, young Hideji found it easy to compose for them the absurdly heroic and lushly sentimental extravaganzas in which girls are rigorously trained to run the whole gamut of human emotions from A to Z. At least F. Dancs are also well-drilled dancers and singers, the idols of teenage girls, and of certain boys like Hideji, who saw in their cute, coy mannerisms an ideal of feminine beauty and behaviour.

Hojo entered the local Osaka University, Kansai, where he graduated in Japanese literature. While still a student, he took a job at Nihon Denryoku (Japan Electric Company), and after graduation worked for the Hakone Tozan Tetsudo, the electric mountain railway in that famed beauty-spot with its perfect views of Mount Fuji. But he went on writing.



Hojo: popular drama

In 1933, he became a "disciple" of the popular novelist and playwright Kido Okamoto, and under his influence wrote for the popular progressive acting troupe of the New National Theatre his first professional play, *Hyakushiki zengo* or "Before and After the Prize-Giving Ceremony".

In 1939, when Kido Okamoto died, Hojo left his job to become a full-time writer of plays. Almost at once, in 1940, he had his first big success with *Kakka* ("Her Highness"), which was awarded the Shinchosha Literary Prize.

This was to be the first of a long series of awards and prizes: the Ministry of Culture's Art Prize (1964), the Yomiuri Literary Prize (1965), the Kikuchi Kan Prize for Distinction in Drama (1973) and the Government's Culture Prize (1987) among many others.

One of the reasons for Hojo's success was that he wrote dramas for ordinary people, for audiences of workers who saw in his plays a mirror of their own modest lives and hidden emotions. The New National Theatre had been founded as long ago as 1917 by the actor Shojiro Sawada, who turned to European models. He had played Jokanaan in the famous actress Matsui Sumako's *Salome* in Oscar Wilde's drama of that name. He also introduced authors like Ibsen, Heibel, Tolstoy and Chekhov.

He established the Shinpa style of acting and production, with the revolutionary naturalism and psychological realism that were to be the cornerstones of the New National Theatre's technique, and for which Hojo tailored his plays, even to the point of simplifying traditional kabuki for the common folk. Kabuki had gone out of fashion before the war, but with the coming of peace and a new, liberating democratic spirit in Japan, one in which women in particular saw themselves playing a more significant role in modern life, a brighter, more popular form of kabuki catered to feminist ideals and women's new consciousness of themselves as the equals (almost) of men.

Hojo was instrumental in feeding this feminist hunger for recognition in his bold staging of works for the New National Theatre, and also for a rejuvenated kabuki, both forms of theatre enjoyed an un-

precedented post-war success. One of Hojo's biggest triumphs on the kabuki stage was his clearly constructed and simply written treatment of *Ukifune*, a celebrated love story from Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*, a work that had been banned from the pre-war stage because of its connections with the Imperial Family. It is this revitalised kabuki that we enjoy today, with great stars like Tamazaburo exelling in western roles like the Lady of the Camellias as well as in all the great classics of the kabuki tradition. For this renewal we shall always be indebted to the pioneering work of Hideji Hojo.

One of his most memorable post-war triumphs was *Osho*, a real-life story of a very poor working man who was the genius of *shogi* or Japanese chess. In 1947, the first presentation of this work was a revelation in its real-life characterisation and skilful handling of dramatic situations. It was a triumph both for the acting group and for Hideji Hojo. It was made into a highly successful movie.

Hideji Hojo's last work, in 1993, was for the New National Theatre star Ken Ogata, and entitled *Shinano no Issa*, the touching story of the sad life of the haiku poet Issa Kobayashi (1763-1827).

Today, there are no good writers for the Japanese theatre, whether new-style or kabuki. That is part of the general decline of literary culture in Japan, where in the past such great authors as Jun-ichiro Tanizaki and Yukio Mishima lent their talents to the stage. So the passing of Hideji Hojo is a great loss to popular drama.

Hojo used to invite all his friends and actors to a year-end party at a temple near his house in Kamakura. It was always a joyous celebration of the writer's long life, though he used to joke that it was a rehearsal for his wake. Now that he has left us, we remember those preparatory funeral speeches with a curious mixture of sadness and satisfaction, as at the end of one of Hideji Hojo's most moving plays. Bravo, "Emperor!"

James Kirkup

Hideji Hojo (Hideji Hojo), playwright and stage director, born Osaka 1902; married (one daughter); died Kamakura 19 May 1996.



As mountainous 60-foot waves smash into the cliffs below them, David Lean (right of camera in trench-coat) and his camera crew brace themselves against hurricane-force winds gusting at 90mph to film a climactic scene in *Ryan's Daughter*: MGM promotional still for Lean's film taken by Ken Bray, 1970 Photograph: Kobal Collection

Ken Bray

One of the qualities which united those who surrounded David Lean was enthusiasm. And this applies to his stills photographers as much as to his camera crew. Stills photographers and "backroom boys" are seldom given their due by film historians – yet they are dependent on their work. Quite often it is an image taken by a stills man which passes into the history books to represent a film – like Bray's thrilling picture of Lean, Freddie Young (hidden) and crew filming in the teeth of a gale on *Ryan's Daughter*.

Ken Danvers was David Lean's usual stills photographer. Ken Bray was head of the stills department at MGM

Borehamwood. He was sent to Ireland to set up darkrooms, and then MGM asked him to take over the unit stills work. There was no rivalry with Danvers – "It let him off the hook, really. It was just what he wanted. He could come on the set when he wanted to."

The first getting he got from a worried Lean was "Stop clicking that bloody camera!" (The film was going wildly over budget.) Bray got to know Lean's girlfriend Sandy Hotz, and gradually she began to show Lean his pictures. Lean's interest was aroused; he was a Leica man, and he asked Bray why he preferred a Nikon. "I gave him my usual answer,"

"Would you ask Rembrandt what paintbrush he used?" He roared with laughter – and that broke the ice.

He preferred black-and-white stills to colour slides and he always liked to see what I had taken. He used to criticise the prints from the point of view of cropping. But he was a big help to me, and always found time for me to take stills after he had finished a scene.

To be chosen to work on a David Lean picture was like being chosen to play for England. He always kept people he trusted, and Ken Danvers told me that if you were chosen again, you knew he approved of you."

Ken Bray had to wait. *Ryan's Daughter* (1970) received a critical assault which dissuaded Lean from making another film. (He tried to remake *Mutiny on the Bounty* in the mid-1970s.) Meanwhile, Bray had worked on some of the most important films of the time – 2001, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Great Gatsby* and *Where Eagles Dare*.

He had seen his first films as a child in the silent era, and had been fascinated ever since. He served in the RAF from 1943 to 1947 – he was a sergeant rear gunner in Lancasters. After the war, he worked for Dufay-colour and joined Pinewood Studios as a printer. Six months

later he went to MGM and was promoted to head of their stills department in 1964. His brilliance with a camera was recognised and he worked on 80 or 90 feature films. But David Lean remained his favourite director.

Fourteen years after *Ryan's Daughter*, Lean made another film – *A Passage to India* – and he asked for Ken Bray. "I knew he liked my photography and I retired a happy man."

Kevin Brownlow

Kenneth Henry Bray, photographer, born Bushey, Hertfordshire 31 December 1922; married 1947; Joan Stocks (one son, two daughters); died Watford 18 May 1996.

Peter Pool

Peter Pool was a passionate devotee of the Cornish language, whose revival has been such a spectacular feature of 20th-century Cornwall. Only Hebrew and possibly modern Manx have seen such a dramatic rise in interest.

Pool was one of an active Cornish group following the early pioneers who set up the Old Cornwall Societies and the Cornish Gorsedd (the assembly promoting the cultural identity of Cornwall) in the 1920s. Born in 1933, when the revival of Cornish was still being treated with some suspicion or derision, as a young academic he espoused the cause of Cornish with enthusiasm. In 1960, Cornish is now taught as a GCSE subject, is accredited by the Institute of Linguists, and studied by hundreds of students in Cornwall, Europe, and by emigrant Cornish and others round the world.

School in Penzance and Brixwall, Kent, was followed by a Law degree at Keele College, Oxford, and further law training in London. There Pool joined the London Cornish Association, learnt Cornish by correspondence with Robert Morton Nance, the second Grand Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd, and became proficient, teaching others, and in 1958 producing his book *Cornish for Beginners*.

In the 1950s, he returned to

his beloved Cornwall, first practising as a lawyer in Bodmin and then setting up his own business in Penzance. At the same time, he became immersed in Cornish activities, becoming a Language Bard in 1955, with the bardic name of Gwas Galva, servant of Galver. He served on the Council of the Cornish Gorsedd, and became a respected archaeologist, taking part in many digs. He was elected FSA for his research, some of it with Professor Charles Thomas, first director of the Institute for Cornish Studies, an academic body set up by Exeter University and Cornwall County Council to further local research. With Thomas, he wrote *The antiquities of West Penwith* (1954), an unrivalled guide to west Cornwall. Pool was a research fellow in History at the institute for some years and also helped to establish the Cornish Language Board and was its first secretary.

Numerous books followed. The first was *The Typography of the Penheleg Manuscript* (1959) – a manuscript written in the 16th century by John Penheleg, Head Bailiff of the Arundells of Lanherne of the Hundred of Penwith, at their Manor of Cornerton. (It was found under a butcher's bed in St Buryan.) Other books were *Reminiscences of Penzance* by William Boase, which he edited, and in 1986 a definitive life of Dr

William Borlase, the 18th-century antiquary.

In 1963, Pool married Audrey Humphris, a Celtic/Cornish enthusiast, and moved to a new house at Zennor, a small parish on the north coast of Cornwall, home of many writers from D.H. Lawrence to Virginia Woolf, an unspoiled area which he made his spiritual home. A plaque on the wall records John Davey, one of the last speakers of traditional Cornish.

Windswept and exposed, Zennor epitomised Peter Pool's Cornwall. He immersed himself in its history and became an authority on the parish, publishing *The Life of Henry Quick* (1963), the peasant poet of Zennor, and editing *The Diary of James Stephens* (1977), a Zennor farmer, which was one of the first Cornish books to deal with agricultural life in the last century. After moving back to Penzance, he researched and published *The History of the Town and Borough of Penzance* in 1974, and in 1983 was made an Honorary Freeman for his services to the town.

Peter Pool was more than Cornish language expert, historian, archaeologist and lawyer. For many years he served the Cornish community as director of Pools Engineering, Hayle, the family firm, as Chairman and Librarian of the Penzance Library, Vice-President of the Celtic Con-

gress, President of Penzance Old Cornwall Society, legal adviser to many organisations. From 1974 to 1976 he was President of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, an academic body based on the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, and as editor of its journal was twice awarded the Henwood Medal for research.

Pool was trenchant in his opinions, and one of his last booklets was *The Second Death of Cornish* (1995), where he attacked others who believed that Unified Cornish, the language as formulated in the 1920s by Robert Morton Nance, ceased drastic and sweeping changes. It was a strong plea for careful and considered research first. While some did not agree with his stance, most have respected his scholarship. He was a founder member of Agan Tavas ("Our Tongue"), an organisation promoting Unified Cornish.

Peter Pool is buried in the little stone churchyard at Zennor, the heart of his beloved Cornwall, near the grave of Robert Morton Nance and under the shadow of Cam Galver, from which he took his bardic name.

Ann Trevenen Jenkins

Peter Audrey Seymour Pool, historian, archaeologist, lawyer, born 16 March 1933; married 1965 Audrey Humphris; died Hayle, Cornwall 18 May 1996.

A pre-Second World War weekend airman, Robin McNair prepared himself for the coming war by learning to fly. He was in action by 1940 and took part in the tail-end of the Battle of Britain: some 280-odd sorties later he was one of the few pilots from that time still flying operationally after the invasion of Europe in late 1944.

McNair was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1918 and educated in England, at Douai School. He joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in early 1939, and when called for war service completed his training and was posted to No 3 Squadron at Wick in Scotland, which was equipped with Hurricanes. By 1940 he was a fighter pilot. Towards the end of September, with the Battle of Britain raging in the south, McNair was



McNair: 280 sorties

posted to No 249 Squadron on the North Weald, Kent. With the coming of German night fighters and Britain ill-equipped to deal with night bombers, he was sent to the newly formed No 96 Squadron to fly first Hurricanes at night and then Defiant two-seater nightfighters. Over Liverpool on 12 March 1941 he shot down a Heinkel 111 raider. On completing his tour of duty he became an instructor at a nightfighter Operational Training Unit.

Early in 1942, by now commissioned, McNair was assigned to No 67 Squadron at Charny Down, Devon, where he flew Hurricanes on night-fighter and night-intruder sorties to Cherbourg and along the French coast. He also flew with the squadron during the famous Dieppe raid on 19 August, and the following month received the DFC. In October he joined 245 Squadron (also at Charny Down) and was promoted to flight commander in early 1943.

At the beginning of 1944 McNair was given command of 247 Squadron, flying bombing and night-fighter sorties and preparing for D-Day. He led the unit not only on that famous day, 20 June, but also against numerous ground targets, especially the German V-1 rocket sites along the northern French coast. He saw action at Calais and was acting wing

leader on No 124 wing in Normandy.

In July 1944 his engine was knocked out by ground fire, but he succeeded in driving his seven-ton fighter bomber across the front lines to crash-land successfully in a field. He later became chief instructor at No 55 OTU and received a bar to his DFC in September having completed 280 war sorties.

Amongst his various adventures, McNair once had to bale out from his damaged fighter only to find his parachute did not deploy properly, but by wrestling with the lines he managed to get it open just before hitting the ground. He was also one of the first pilots to land on Jersey after the liberation of the Channel Islands in May 1945. The same year he flew Britain's first jet fighter, the Gloucester Meteor, with No 74 Squadron. He was released from the RAF in January 1946.

He was married in 1940 to Estelle Townsend, who came from an Irish military family which boasted several Lord-Lieutenants of Ireland.

After the war McNair went into civil aviation with British Overseas Airways (which later merged with the British Overseas Airways Corporation, BOAC) and was stationed as superintendent at Frankfurt and Geneva. In 1951 he was appointed deputy to Lord Amherst, the director of associate

companies at BEA headquarters in London, and in 1957 he was made senior commercial negotiator at the Department of External Affairs, working with Olympic Airways and Aristotle Onassis during negotiations over European and Mediterranean routes.

Over the next few years he held a number of senior positions with BEA, including airline adviser to (now Dame) Alison Munro, then Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Aviation and the UK negotiator in Beirut in 1960. He retired in 1979 as General Manager, Western Europe.

A keen sportsman in his youth, McNair played rugby for Sussex in 1938 and cricket for Hove, with whom he had the highest batting average for 1939. A devout Catholic, he founded a number of charities and caring bodies in his later years including the Society of St Vincent de Paul; he also became secretary of St Benedict's School in Ealing, chairman of St Augustine's Priory and the most senior president of Douai School.

Norman Franks

Robin John McNair, pilot and businessman; born Rio de Janeiro 21 May 1918; DFC 1942, and bar 1944; married 1940 Estelle Townsend (three sons, four daughters); died Chichester 18 May 1996.

Professor Geoffrey Dawes

May I add briefly to the obituaries of Professor Geoffrey Dawes [by Professor C.W.G. Redman and Dr John Walker, to May?] writes Professor Gustav Born.

As Director of the new Nuffield Institute for Medical Research from the remarkably early age of 30, Dawes did much more than justify the electors' confidence in his

scientific ability. From the start he also imbued it with the splendid human qualities which made working with him such a joy. He had the unself-conscious benevolence of the

best in any field. So he created an institute which, in its co-egalitarian fellowship and lack of envy, was characteristic of Britain's attractive scientific scene before its erosion through

the imposition of "market forces" where they do not belong.

Unsurprisingly he had an exceptionally stable team which participated in all the important

discoveries, such as the closure mechanism of the ductus arteriosus.

Although Geoffrey Dawes took me on to do the biochemical work in his physio-

logical experiments, he quite explicitly provided the time, space and support needed for getting going with my own research. This was typical of his generosity.

Joseph Mitchell, journalist, died New York 24 May, aged 88. Staff writer for the *New Yorker* remembered for such stories as "McSorely's Wonderful Saloon" and "Joe Gould's Secret", both reprinted in 1992. His byline last appeared in the magazine in 1964.

DEATHS

NORFOLK: Reginald Francis, aged 81. Died peacefully at home on 25 May. He wife, Clare, and children, Tony, Deborah, Andrew and Giles, invite his friends to a celebration of his life at Weymouth Friends Meeting House on 3 June at 4pm. Please remember Reginald with flowers, but – if you wish – with a donation to Water Aid, or St Richard's Hospice, Worcester.

Announcements for Gazette
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS
(Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam notices) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2021) or faxed to 0171-293 2000.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

Birthdays

Dr Eric Anderson, Rector, Lincoln College, Oxford, 6th; The Right Rev Simon Barrington-Ward, Bishop of Coventry, 6th; Professor John Barth, author, 6th; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Benjamin Bathurst, former First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, 6th; Mr Jeffrey Bernard, writer, 6th; The Right Rev Hugh Budd, Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth, 5th; Miss Cilla Black, singer, 5th; Earl Cairns, chairman, BAT Industries, 5th; Mr Pat Cash, tennis player, 31st; Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, former Governor of Gibraltar, 6th; Sir Anthony Colman, High Court judge, 5th; Mr Bryan Cowgill, former deputy chairman, Mirror Group, 6th; Col Sir William Crawshaw, Vice 1st

Lieutenant of Gwent, 7th; Lord Erroll of Hale, former government minister, 8th; Mr Roger Freeman MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 5th; Mr Paul Gascoigne, footballer, 29th; Mr Duncan Goodhew, swimmer, 39th; Mr Norman Griggs, former vice-president, Building Societies Association, 8th; Lord Holme of Cheltenham, former President, Liberal Party, 6th; Dr Henry Kissinger, statesman, 7th; Mr Christopher Lee, actor, 7th; Sir John Moberly, diplomat, 7th; Miss Thea Musgrave, composer, 6th; Miss Davina Phillips, property developer and former actress, 5th; Miss Florence Sharples, former executive director, YWCA, 6th; Mr Ravi Shastri, cricketer, 34th; Mr Sam Smead, golfer, 34th; Sir David Stevenson, former chairman

British Airways, 8th; Mr Michael Webster, former chairman, DRG, 7th; Mr Don Williams, singer, 5th; Mr Herman Wouk, novelist, 81.

Anniversaries

Births: Ibn Khaldun, historian, 1332; Maximilian I, King of Bavaria, 1756; Sir Francis Beaufort, admiral and hydrographer, 1774; Jacques-François Fréminet-Ellie Hiley (Ellie Levy), composer, 1799; Sir Henry Parkes, statesman, 1815; Amelia Jenks Bloomer, women's rights campaigner, 1818; Julia Ward Howe, poet and social reformer, 1819; Joseph Joachim Raff, composer, 1822; Jay Gould, railway builder, 1836; James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok, frontier

novelist, 1867; Georges-Henri Rouault, Expressionist painter, 1871; Isadora Duncan, dancer, 1878; Samuel Dashfield Hammett, detective-story writer, 1894; Sir John Douglas Cockcroft, physicist, 1897; Hubert Horatio Humphrey, US senator and Vice-President, 1911; Vincent Leonard Price, actor and writer, 1911; Deaths: Thomas Munster, Anabaptist campaigner, executed 1525; John Calvin, theologian, 1564; Archibald Campbell, Marquess of Argyll, soldier, beheaded 1661; François-Emile Babeuf, French revolutionary, 1797; Niccolò Paganini, violinist, 1840; Joseph Bosworth, lexicographer and scholar, 1876; Robert Koch, bacteriologist, 1910; Sir Joseph Wilson Swan, physicist and

riam, 1918; Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey, soldier, 1951; Jswalharal Nehru, statesman, 1964. On this day: the Habeas Corpus Act was passed, 1679; St Petersburg (Leningrad) was founded by Peter the Great, 1703; the trial of William Palmer, doctor and poisoner, ended with a verdict of guilty, 1856; at the naval battle of Tushima Straits, the Russian fleet of 32 vessels was annihilated by the Japanese under Togo, 1905; the first transatlantic air flight, with a five-man US crew, arrived at Lisbon, 1919; the Cunard liner *Queen Mary* sailed on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York, 1936; the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, opened, 1937; the German

the physicist Auguste Picard was the first man to ascend into the stratosphere, reaching a height of 54,000ft in a balloon, 1931; the European Defence Community was set up, 1952. Today is the Feast Day of St Augustine of Canterbury, St Eutropius of Orange, St Julius of Durostorum, St Melangeur of Moocella and St Restituta of Sorà.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Prince Michael of Kent, Commonwealth President of the Royal Life Saving Society, opens the 1996 Quinquennial Conference at the Falcon Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11 June.

سكان من العراق

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

ScottishPower

Headquarters: Glasgow
Market Capitalisation: £3.2bn
No. of Employees: 6,000
Chief Executive: Ian Robinson
Sales (1995/96): £2.3bn
Pre-tax profits: £477m
Customer base: 3 million



Southern Water plc

Headquarters: Worthing
Market Capitalisation: £1.06bn
No. of Employees: 3,700
Chief Executive: William Courtney, Martin Webster
Sales (1995): £384m
Pre-tax profit: £43.4m
Customer base: 2 million

£1.3bn water war set to erupt as bidders move on Southern

MICHAEL HARRISON and MATTHEW HORSMAN

A bidding war looked set to break out last night as Southern Water confirmed it had received approaches from two potential buyers, including ScottishPower, and was considering its options.

A bid, expected to be in the region of £1.3bn, could again ignite the utilities sector, where analysts and investors had been expecting further bid action since the mergers of Swalec and Welsh Water and of NorWeb

and North West Water. Shares in Southern Water, which closed Friday at 681p, are expected to soar in trading tomorrow, following the holiday weekend.

ScottishPower, confirming its interest, said a bid would be a step toward creating a multi-utility conglomerate, giving it a water utility to add to its other regulated businesses, which include gas and telecoms.

"We are confirming our interest in Southern and would like to reach agreement with their board," a spokesman for ScottishPower said.

Analysts speculated last night that a US or French utility could also be in the frame. Companies from both countries have been on the acquisition trail in the UK.

An agreed bid was believed to be the most likely outcome, depending on negotiations in coming days. Southern Water is expected to make a formal statement to the Stock Exchange tomorrow.

ScottishPower, which last year paid £1.1bn for Manweb, the regional electricity company, has appointed ING Barings

UBS, James Capel and Scottish firm Noble Grossart. Southern's bankers are Rothschilds and SBC Warburg.

Southern Water, which is capitalised at just over £1bn, last year bought back 10 per cent of its shares, and has one of the industry's strongest balance sheets. According to current fashion in the utility sector, a merger with Scottish would allow the two companies to save millions on centralised costs.

Joint billing systems, metering, information systems, procurement and transport can all

generate savings, the company believes. Scottish expects to be able to cut operating costs by as much as £100m by 1998 following its takeover of Manweb.

Similar efficiencies could be achieved through a merger of Scottish and Southern, although insiders caution that the savings would not be as great. Moreover, gearing, now at 52 per cent, would rise further in the event of a successful bid.

The aim is to develop a stronger brand name for Scottish as a utilities provider, irrespective of region. "It's all

about price and service," one source said.

ScottishPower owns Caledonian Gas, which supplies 6,000 commercial and industrial customers in the UK. Last year, Scottish spent £18m developing its telecoms subsidiary, Scottish Telecom, which is rolling out a fibre-optic network in Central Scotland.

A bid by ScottishPower for Southern is unlikely to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, as there are no obvious competitive issues arising from the merger.

Black looks to home for next media binge

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Conrad Black's Hollinger group wants to take control of Canada's leading business newspaper, the *Financial Post*, in which he already has a 20 per cent stake, sources close to the company said at the weekend.

The purchase could coincide with a full bid for Southern, the giant Toronto-based newspaper group, in which Hollinger holds 41 per cent, following the purchase last week of a 20 per cent stake previously owned by Power Corporation of Montreal.

Mr Black's renewed interest in Canada, his home country, has fuelled speculation that he was preparing to sell a 25 per cent holding in Fairfax, a leading Australian newspaper group, to help finance acquisitions in North America.

But Mr Black's London-based lieutenant Dan Colson, deputy chairman of the Tele-

graph Group and Fairfax, denied Mr Black was poised to sell the Fairfax shares. "Our position on Fairfax has not changed," he said yesterday. "We still want to increase our stake and will do so once we are permitted. The only reason we would want to sell is if the review does not allow us to increase our holding."

The Australian government is reviewing the cap on newspaper ownership that has kept Mr Black's Fairfax holding stuck at 25 per cent. Australian media mogul Kerry Packer owns 17 per cent of the shares, while Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation is believed to have a 5 per cent stake.

Mr Black's interest in the money-losing *Financial Post*, in which the *Financial Times* also has a stake, follows a decision earlier this month by its owners, Rogers Communications, to sell its newspaper division, which includes the *Toronto Sun*,

a downmarket tabloid, as well as the *Post*.

Ted Rogers, who made a fortune in the cable industry in Canada, is believed to be seeking a single buyer for both the *Sun* and the *Post*, but Mr Black's advisers believe they can reach a deal none the less.

Two competing media companies, Thomson and Quebecor, are also thought to be interested in the Rogers titles. Toronto-based analysts speculated over the weekend that Power Corporation, controlled by Paul Desmarais, could bid for both the *Toronto Sun* and the *Post*, and arrange to sell the financial daily on to Hollinger at a later date.

Mr Black and Mr Desmarais's Power Corporation had been partners in Southern, where each held about 20 per cent of the shares. Late last Friday night, Mr Black announced he would pay £294m for Power's stake.

Hollinger is now expected to make market purchases to take the holding to just short of 50 per cent. Thereafter, and probably within three months, Hollinger will make a full, all-share bid for the company, aiming to take its stake to more than 50 per cent. Mr Black has long coveted Southern, publishers of several leading papers,



Paper chase: Conrad Black wants to expand in Canada

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

Ladbroke raises £100m in sale of Langham Hilton

Ladbroke, the hotels and leisure company, yesterday kicked off its long-awaited hotels disposal programme, raising £100m from the sale of the Langham Hilton in central London to Hong Kong-based Great Eagle, writes Matthew Horsman.

The sale will leave Ladbroke with a management contract to operate the hotel, and a spokesman insisted yesterday that clients will "not even notice the difference".

The disposal follows a shift in strategy at Ladbroke. The company is seeking to reduce the amount of capital it has invested in hotel properties, while retaining its strong Hilton brand through management contracts. The group operates 161 hotels around the world, 58 of which are run on management contracts.

In the UK, its 41 hotels are nearly all owned outright, with the exception of the Langham, located in Langham Place, central London, and two airport hotels at Stansted and Heathrow.

"We have stated clearly that we aim to manage our hotels, and liquidate hotel assets as and when the offers arrive," the spokesman said.

The Langham sale attracted considerable attention, and the

price achieved was far in excess of market forecasts.

Under the deal, Ladbroke receives a deposit of £10m, with the balance to be paid by August.

The hotel had operating profits of £7.5m last year, and yielded about £100 a room - at the upper end of market performance.

Ladbroke intends to continue to invest in the hotels market, but is not interested in buying hotel properties outright.

It has ruled out bidding for the 17 Exclusive Fortis hotels put up for sale last week by Granada as part of its disposal programme following the £3.9bn takeover of Fortis earlier this year.

Great Eagle said yesterday it viewed the Langham purchase as a "long-term investment", and would fund the deal from a mixture of own resources and bank financing.

Great Eagle owns two luxury hotels and three apartment buildings in Hong Kong.

The company has said that it is investigating other acquisition targets in New York, Hong Kong, mainland China and on the West Coast of the United States.

Izzy wizzy, Guinness Mahon gets busy

With Sooty and friends under his belt, the merchant bank chief is waving his wand in other new directions

David Potter, the merchant banker, is in the media spotlight, and all because of a bear.

Not a bear market, mind, but one of the puppet variety, for it is Mr Potter's bank, Guinness Mahon, which last week snapped up the rights to Sooty for £1.4m.

The media attention came as a bit of surprise at Guinness Mahon's London headquarters, just off Eastcheap, and has put Mr Potter, 51, into an even more ebullient mood than usual. As soon as the news broke, the bank was deluged with calls. Mr Potter, wreathed in his usual cigar smoke, says he firmly believes that the visibility will attract even more business in the fast-growing area of intellectual property rights.

And one thing is certain: last week's positive press coverage was far more welcome than the stories that traced the bank's trudge with near-bankruptcy six years ago.

The rights to Sooty and friends were bought by the £8m Global Rights Development Fund, which is managed by the development capital arm of Guinness Mahon, co-owned by the bank, Sony and a number of City pension funds. Its managers are furiously buying up rights in order to be a player in the emerging "new media" sector, and it already owns the rights to Thomas the Tank Engine.

Guinness Mahon's growing expertise on the corporate finance side of new media testifies to its new-found confidence. It almost went bust at the end of the 1980s, a victim of the property crash and unwise diversification into leasing, mixed with a seemingly endless series of corporate intrigues which involved Lord Kinnaird, its founder, Sir Robert Morton, Sir Ron Brierley and the late

Robert Maxwell, among others. Now Mr Potter wants to build on Guinness Mahon's success in film finance - its latest is *Richard III* starring Sir Ian McKellen - and grow the fund.

"The fund has had [the rights to] Thomas the Tank Engine for a fairly long time. Sooty seems to have captured people's imagination in a way which has exceeded our expectations. It underlines the fact that it's probably a good investment for the fund."

"It should lead to other people, with rights to sell, approaching us."

Mr Potter made his name in the 1970s at White Weld, the eurobond firm that was later rolled into Credit Suisse First Boston. He joined Guinness Mahon in 1990 as chief executive.

The start of Guinness Mahon's long rehabilitation came in 1989. Bank of Yokohama bought out the previous owner, Equicorp, the New Zealand group. Mr Potter now says the Japanese have been "very good owners - the best we could have hoped for."

They have certainly had to be patient. In the year after Mr Potter joined, the bank made losses of £35.5m in the first half alone.

Mr Potter reacted with a new strategy, dumping corporate lending to the likes of Polly Peck in favour of generating fee income. Leasing and property lending have been wound down. The business now has three legs: the corporate finance side, fund management, and the stockbrokers Henderson Crosthwaite.

So is Guinness Mahon making a profit? "Oh sure, yes," replies the chairman. "We made our first genuine bottom-line profits in 1995, and we're doing

significantly better this year." As for the future, he adds: "Two things will happen: the stock market may boil over and new issues will dry up a bit. Also there's the general election - not that a Labour government would be particularly bad for business." Mr Potter adds that this is a personal view only.

Mr Potter, respected as a marketing whizz, believes he has found a new niche for the business - one vacated by the old City merchant banks as many of them have been snapped up by global banks and turned into "bulge bracket" organisations.

With banks such as Kleinwort Benson and SG Warburg now under such global ownership, Mr Potter believes there is room for a traditional small City merchant bank which is prepared to take risks and put capital behind entrepreneurs in the £10m-£200m bracket.

As the bank's recovery has slowly been confirmed, overseas institutions have started to regard it as a possible target. Many institutions want investment banking representation in London, and there aren't many merchant banks left to buy.

Mr Potter admits that some of the offers have been interesting - especially when the potential buyer would have provided new distribution power for equities. But he insists that he is happy with Bank of Yokohama.

There is no doubt that Guinness Mahon still bears the scars of the disasters of the past decade. The current media interest could be regarded as frothy. As a rival rather unkindly comments: "It might end up being called Sooty Bank."

As long as the deals keep rolling in, it's unlikely Mr Potter would care all that much.

John Willcock

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SCIENCE

If the Big Bang created matter and its opposite in equal quantities, why is there so little antimatter around?
Brian Foster reports on an experiment that could solve one of the most fundamental and puzzling mysteries of science

Heart of the antimatter

In the Bay Area of California, not far from San Francisco, a three-kilometre concrete tunnel runs straight as an arrow under the freeway, pointing towards the Pacific. This is the Stanford Linear Accelerator, whose remarkable history stretches back to the Sixties and the discovery that inside the "fundamental" particles that make up the atomic nucleus lie much smaller objects – quarks.

Now this venerable accelerator is to be deployed in an investigation into beauty – at least, beauty as understood by particle physicists. The goal is to discover why the universe is lopsided and is composed almost entirely of matter – the familiar stuff in the world around us – and contains very little antimatter, even though the laws of physics make almost no distinction between matter and antimatter.

This may seem esoteric, but it is vital for us all that this asymmetry exists. Otherwise the universe would be a totally featureless cavity filled with nothing but countless billions of photons – pure radiation energy – at a temperature of just 3 degrees above absolute zero. Antimatter is fictionally familiar to devotees of *Star Trek* – the engines of the *Starship Enterprise* derive their power by combining matter and antimatter to yield pure energy.

In real life, antimatter consists of particles many of whose properties, such as electric charge, are the opposite of those found in ordinary matter. Should a particle come into contact with its antiparticle counterpart, they annihilate, producing a burst of radiation as their mass is converted into energy according to Einstein's famous equation $E=mc^2$. So if matter and antimatter were created equally during the Big Bang that started the universe, their mutual collisions since should have resulted in the annihilation of everything that makes life possible and makes the universe in which we live remotely interesting.

Recently, experimenters at the European centre for particle physics, Cern, in Geneva, succeeded for the first time in producing not just the nucleus of anti-hydrogen, the antiproton, but also an orbiting anti-electron (positron), and produced three atoms of anti-hydrogen. It took an enormous degree of scientific expertise to achieve this, so the question is, why are there so few anti-atoms naturally present?

The key is in the phrase that the laws of physics make "almost no distinction" between the two. The laws of physics were indeed found, in 1964, to show a small asymmetry between particle and anti-particle, a totally unexpected discovery which gained a

Nobel prize. The origin of this asymmetry was a total mystery when it was discovered and it remains so to this day.

Until we discover the reason for this tiny asymmetry we will never understand how the universe has evolved to its present state. This month, after more than two years of prototyping and preparation, the UK agreed to participate in BaBar, an experiment that should solve this matter-antimatter mystery.

Despite the elephantine connotations of its name, BaBar is not a behemoth the size of a cathedral, as are the detectors for the Large Hadron Collider under construction at Cern. Even though it is a much more homely device, it is still the size of a small house, and crammed with sophisticated particle detectors and electronics. BaBar will look at collisions between particles and antiparticles that contain heavy quarks and heavy antiquarks respectively. This is where the beauty comes in: for beauty in the eye of the particle physicist is actually a specific type of heavy quark. (Sometimes more precisely known as the bottom quark.) The physicists expect that, extremely rarely, those beauty-containing heavy particles that do not carry any electrical charge will suddenly flip into antiparticles. They hope



The heart of the enormous Stanford Linear Accelerator through which the particle beam pipe runs and, right, its site in California. Science Photo Library

that the effect will be much bigger in those heavy quark systems than was the case for the light quarks which were all that it was possible to produce in 1994, thereby enabling a much more accurate measurement of the asymmetry. The problem is that although the asymmetry is much bigger, it only occurs in a tiny fraction of the final states to which the heavy bottom quarks and antiquarks decay. Thus in order to measure the effect, many millions of particles containing bottom quarks must be produced. This necessity means that the BaBar detector

will sit around an accelerator known as a beauty factory.

In many ways the most challenging part of the project is to construct the accelerator capable of delivering this unprecedented number of b-particles to the BaBar experiment. Beams collide in the centre of BaBar approximately 200 million times per second. The extremely difficult experimental conditions to which the accelerator gives rise mean that although relatively small, BaBar needs to be extremely smart.

Since only a tiny fraction of the possible states that can be

produced provide evidence of matter-antimatter asymmetry, it is essential that the BaBar apparatus be able to completely identify and measure all the particles produced by the initial electron-positron annihilation. The detector has to be accurate as well as complex, and must measure both electrically charged and neutral particles well. The UK groups, coming from 10 universities, are building a large part of the neutral particle detector, which consists of several thousand crystals of caesium iodide doped with small amounts of thallium. The UK groups are

also responsible for the sophisticated electronics required to digitise the information and record it on computer. Very few manufacturers are capable of producing high quality CsI crystals, and the UK universities have worked closely with one, Hilger, in Kent. As a result the company has been awarded a contract from the US worth \$4m. Indeed, other UK firms such as Micron and EEV have been awarded contracts worth \$3m and \$1m respectively, so that already the orders received by UK industry have exceeded by a factor of 2 the £2.5m capital cost of UK participation in the experiment.

The design and construction of the detector as well as the accelerator is well under way. The schedule is tight, calling for the experiment to be taking data in 1999. The project is truly international, with teams from France, Germany, Italy and Norway as well as the US, Canada, Russia, China and Taiwan. The precision results that BaBar will provide on the matter-antimatter asymmetry in the fundamental forces will arrive in time for the new millennium.

Pluto and Charon, the odd couple

Eighteen years ago this month, Jim Christy – an astronomer at the US Naval Observatory in Washington – found that what looked like a pear-shaped Pluto was in fact the combination of two bodies – Pluto, and its hitherto undiscovered moon. He named his discovery Charon – not after the ferryman who transported souls across the River Styx to Pluto's Underworld, but after his wife, Charlene. Those in the know pronounce it "Sharon", instead of the classical "Kar-on".

The discovery of Charon cleared up one mystery about Pluto – its mass. Astronomers believed they had originally tracked the planet down as a result of its gravitational pull on Uranus and Neptune. But observations of the orbit of Charon revealed that Pluto is only one-fifth the mass of the Earth – you'd even need 30 Plutos to make up the next smallest planet, Mercury. Now astronomers believe that the apparent discrepancies in the paths of Uranus and Neptune were simply errors of measurement.

Pluto and Charon are a strange couple. Each is tiny: Pluto measures 2,284km across, while Charon's diameter is a mere 1,192km. The pair look like a double planet, especially as Charon is 20 times closer to

New images reveal the tiny planet and its moon in detail. By **Heather Couper** and **Nigel Henbest**

Pluto than the Moon is to the Earth. This proximity has raised huge tidal bulges on both bodies, and the pair are now locked facing one another.

From the "far" side of Pluto, you would never see its moon. Christy's discovery of Charon came at a fortuitous time. For just a few years in Pluto's 248-year orbit about the Sun, the two bodies are angled to us in a way that they periodically eclipse each other. The eclipses started in the mid-1980s, and astronomers were able to monitor the changing brightness of the system as the bodies covered and uncovered one another. This allowed them to make the first crude maps of Pluto and its moon, revealing that Pluto has bright polar caps – probably made of methane ice.

Now the Hubble Space Telescope has scanned Pluto, revealing details as small as 160km across. The images look remarkably like Mars viewed through a small telescope, showing broad dark and light patches. These may be regions of frost which move across the planet according to its seasons.

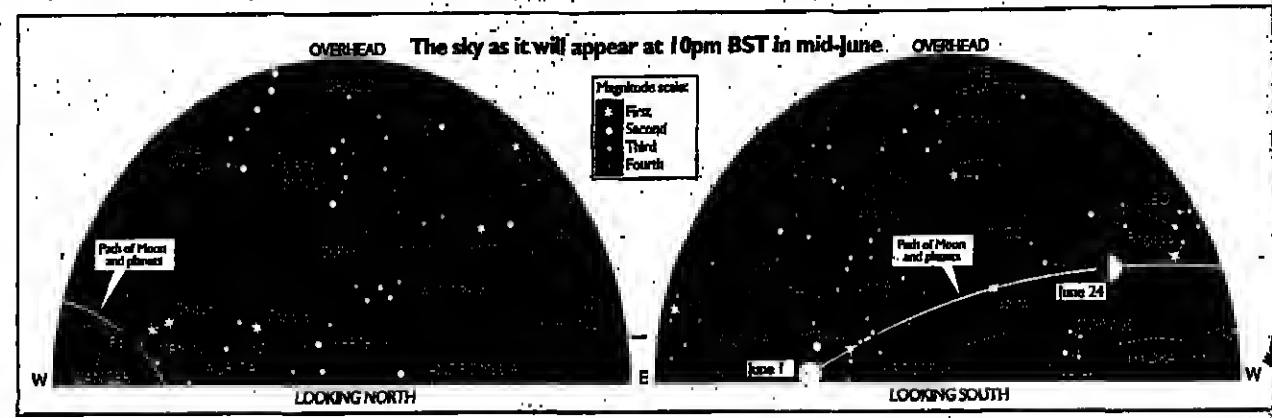
We may be in for an even closer view. In 2001, America's space agency NASA hopes to launch the first space mission to Pluto – the *Pluto Express*. It would consist of two small spacecraft targeted to arrive at Pluto three to six months apart in 2013. But time is of the essence. Pluto, which has a very oval, tilted orbit, is currently at its closest to the Sun – inside the orbit of Neptune. The (relative) warmth has spurred the tiny planet into activity, producing a thin temporary atmosphere. If we are to see Pluto at its most exciting – and perhaps even explore its atmosphere with the Russian *Voyager* probe that the *Pluto Express* may carry – then the mission must get off the ground without delay.

The sky in June
 Venus, so long a feature of our evening skies, plunges down into the twilight this month. On June 10 it passes in front of the Sun ("inferior conjunction"), after which it will re-emerge as a morning star.
 Mercury and Mars are both

morning objects, rising one and two hours before sunrise, respectively, by the third week of the month. But they will be hard to spot in the dawn twilight. Jupiter is now up before midnight, in the star-packed (but low) constellation of Sagittarius. And its fellow gas-giant, Saturn, starts to put in an appearance in the south-east from about 2am.

Star-wise, we are in a transition period between the rather lacklustre constellations of spring and the brighter constellations of summer. Antares, the brightest star in Bootes (the Herdsman), is at its highest this month – find it by extending the handle of the Plough downwards. This distinctly orange star, fourth-brightest in the sky, is close to the end of its life. Having used up almost all of its nuclear fuel, it has now become a bloated red giant star almost thirty times bigger than the Sun.

Diary (all times BST)
 June 1 9.47pm Full Moon
 8 12.06pm Moon at last quarter
 10 Venus at inferior conjunction
 16 2.36am New Moon
 21 3.24am Summer solstice
 24 6.23am Moon at first quarter



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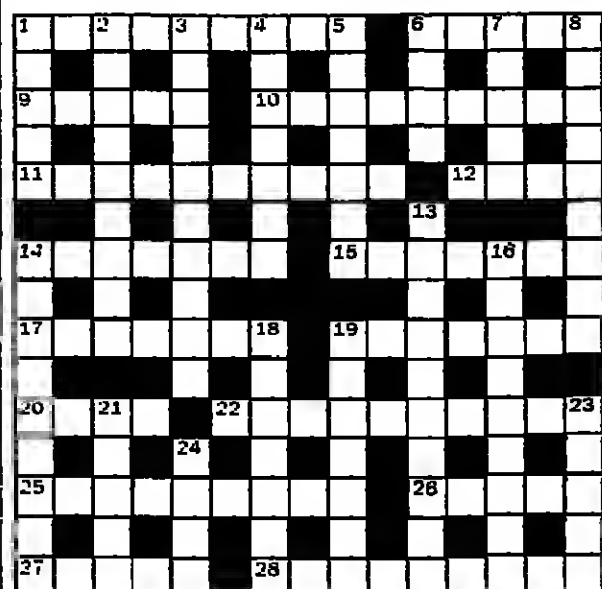
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 2997, Monday 27 May

By Porfiria



- ACROSS**
- 1 Happen to strike a key inside (4,5)
 - 6 Pawn the Italian gold dish (5)
 - 9 Standard method used by trainee (5)
 - 10 He manages several in effect (9)
 - 11 Required replacement to get by rail (10)
 - 12 Equal energy each absorbs (4)
 - 14 Developed high-rise flats (5,2)
 - 15 Go round with a Chinese vegetable (7)
 - 17 Drop is a source of disappointment (3,4)
 - 19 Old chapel's cautious about conservation body (7)
 - 20 Stand empty, by the sound of it (4)
 - 22 Card includes business number as usual (10)
 - 25 Currently occupied with

- DOWN**
- 26 Fibre from palms is always used (5)
 - 27 Prepare government department to receive army personnel (5)
 - 28 Asking her about reduction in size (9)

- DOWN**
- 1 Brief role played in relief work (5)
 - 2 Bronze panel's a winner (9)
 - 3 Charge a lecturer joining overseas mission (10)
 - 4 Open work is best (7)
 - 5 Middle Eastern centres of cultural study (3,4)
 - 6 Guy's become boring, we're told (4)
 - 7 Traditional learning one accepted in France (5)
 - 8 Strange Lutheran you initially find spooky (9)
 - 13 It bans pair freely supported by two parties (10)
 - 14 It may carry promotion in the US (9)
 - 16 Plant of rare merit in the Far East (9)
 - 18 Can the Spanish society get foreign money (7)
 - 19 Oppose matter with hesitation (7)
 - 21 Enough try removing leader (5)
 - 23 Director points out many against research (5)
 - 24 County borders (4)